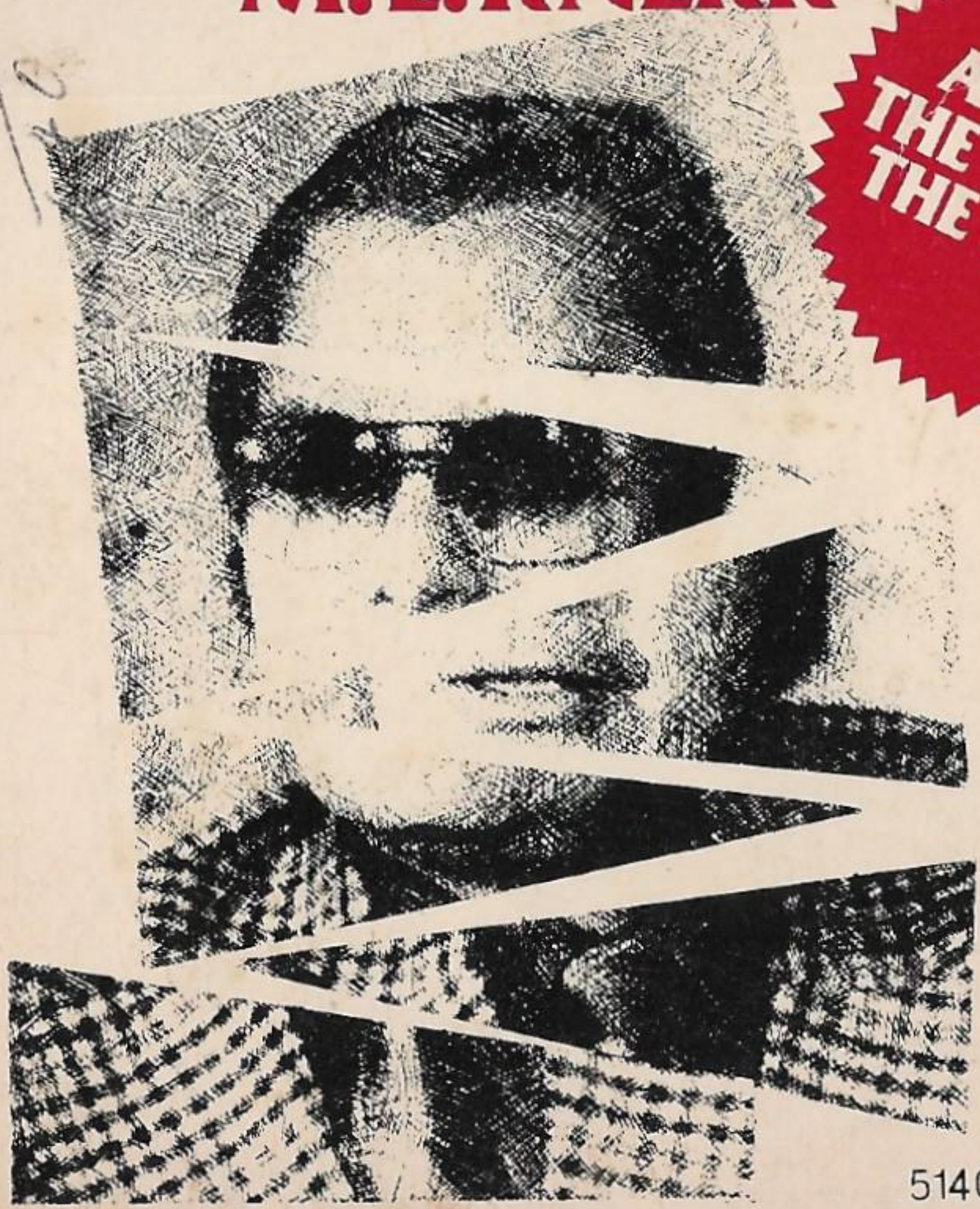
THE SHOCKING STORY BEHIND THE BIZARRE

JIM JONES DEATH CULT!

COMPLETE PHOTO COVERAGE

SUICIDE IN GUYANA

M. E. KNERR



AT LAST! THE REST OF THE STORY

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MRS. MARY ELLIS
25750 N. River Rd.
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Mary Ellis

MESSIAH OF DEATH!

When the United States military task force finished its gruesome task at Jonestown, having filled more than nine hundred coffins with the bodies of the victims of Jim Jones' suicide-murder cult, black smoke hung over the air as the troops burned uniforms, boots, tents and anything else that might have been contaminated by the decaying corpses in the jungle of Guyana.

There were some items that survived destruction—a collection of letters among them. They had been written by the communers to "Dad"—Jim Jones, the Messiah of Death.

One letter said it all. It was written on two sheets of pink paper, in a clear hand, by Don S.

"Dying doesn't interest me yet. I know it's coming any day. I would really like to see this cause grow, and see our little babies grow up. I would be mad if I had to die for some stupid thing somebody did . . . I would gladly die to protect this cause, but not gladly for a mistake . . . I'm afraid that something could happen to Dad, and the ones who take over won't be as wise . . . I have seen too many know-it-alls get the trust and consent of the people . . . I have seen too much expensive confusion that has been caused by people. I fear the failure of this farm for this reason. Even though everyone is making good reports and making good fronts we could be sliding downhill to sink."

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SUICIDE IN GUYANA

M. E. Knerr

BELMONT TOWER BOOKS • NEW YORK CITY

A BELMONT TOWER BOOK

Published by

Tower Publications, Inc.
Two Park Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

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To Those Who Gave Their Lives
at Jonestown

INTRODUCTION

The most shocking, incredible tragedy of modern times occurred on November 18, 1978, in an obscure jungle village in Guyana, South America. After Congressman Leo Ryan of California and four others were killed in cold-blooded ambush, more than 900 members of The Peoples Temple, a quasi religious cult under the leadership of the charismatic Jim Jones, committed suicide *en masse* by consuming a poisoned drink.

In this book, San Francisco-based reporter and free-lance writer Michael Knerr delves beneath the surface of the screaming headlines to answer the questions uppermost in everyone's mind. Who was Jim Jones? What was the origin of The Peoples Temple, over which Jones presided in an almost godlike capacity? What was the source of his mysterious power over his followers, a power that compelled them to the brink of death—and beyond? What bizarre sexual practices did Jones engage in with members of the community? Did he die of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, or was he murdered? And why did the FBI refuse to respond to urgent requests that the cult be investigated several years ago?

Mr. Knerr has had access to hitherto untapped sources, in addition to the voluminous coverage by the media in the San Francisco-Los Angeles area, and has unearthed some startling new facts unavailable earlier. His painstaking research has included interviews with those immediately involved, as well as with government officials intimately connected with the tragedy.

November 18, 1978 deserves to join December 7, 1941 as "a day that will live in infamy"!

The Bloodbath

CHAPTER ONE

At nine o'clock at night on almost any Saturday, the lights, if any, in San Francisco's Federal Building would be few. Parking places would be easy to find, and only the guards would be visible through the glass doors on the Turk Street entrance.

On the evening of November 18, 1978, the building was lit up brightly and parking places around the tall gray structure were practically non-existent. Officials, which included those of the Attorney General's office, were in their offices and phones were ringing. Although nothing seemed to have been confirmed, it had been reported by Washington that Democratic Congressman Leo J. Ryan, of San Mateo, had been killed in Guyana, where he and a party of twenty people had gone to

investigate a compound of 27,000 acres owned by the Peoples Temple and their leader the Rev. Jim Jones.

With a background of non-violence in the California area since 1965, it seemed improbable to the average citizen that Jones' group could have done such a thing. Others, who knew better, were well aware of the undercurrent of violence and mass suicide that had permeated the cult during the past few years. Californians waited, along with much of the nation, for whatever new developments would come out of the South American jungles.

Emergency passports were issued to two San Francisco *Examiner* staff members, James Willse and Eric Meskauskas, who were to catch a 1:00 A.M. plane at San Francisco International Airport in an effort to determine what had happened to photographer Greg Robinson and reporter Tim Reiterman, who were among those in the Congressman's party. Willse and Meskauskas both were worried about what they were getting into, and concern showed on their faces. Passports readied, they left on their journey, first to Texas and then to Miami where they would finally catch a flight to Guyana.

Although Californians knew little or nothing on Saturday, the insane weekend had begun much earlier at the Peoples Temple site at what was known as Jonestown, a commune eight miles from tiny Port Kaituma on Guyana's northern seacoast. A town one hundred and fifty miles north of the capitol of

Georgetown, Port Kaituma was the site of a small, dirt airstrip used by Ryan's party to reach the isolated compound of Jonestown.

Early Sunday morning it was confirmed that the 53 year-old Congressman had been shot and killed, along with NBC newsman Don Harris, NBC cameraman Robert Brown, *Examiner* photographer Greg Robinson and a temple member named Patricia Parks, who was among as many as twenty of Jim Jones' followers who wanted out.

At the Georgetown headquarters of the cult an aide to Jones' group, Sharon Amos, was reported to have slashed the throats of her three children and then killed herself in the same manner.

Back in Jonestown, on Saturday night, four hundred and five members of the cult, including their leader, Jim Jones, killed themselves with cyanide-laced grape Koolade, or with firearms. Jones was later found shot through the temple, apparently a self-inflicted wound. He was one of three to die in that manner.

Survivors of the ambush at the Port Kaituma airstrip escaped from the barrage of gunfire into the surrounding jungle. When they felt it safe to return to where their plane sat on the runway, they found the bodies of the others lying under the aircraft. The wounded spent a long night in Port Kaituma, expecting to be attacked again. The occurrance of a tropical storm, they thought, had kept the cult members from attacking a second time. In the

morning they were flown to Georgetown.

At first there was a trickle of news from the jungle, but by the beginning of the week San Francisco papers, as well as those across the country, were full of stories about the largest mass suicide in history, as well as one of the most insane gatherings in the history of cults.

For months Congressman Ryan had listened to reports from relatives of cult members in Guyana—reports identifying the jungle retreat as a prison. It was claimed that Jones' guards refused to allow anyone to leave the clearing in the rain forest. One man, it was later learned, had tried to escape. He had been caught and beaten.

Beatings and corporal punishment were not new accusations where the Peoples Temple was concerned, and there were many ex-members who had stated this fact often to San Francisco newsmen.

A man of action, Ryan announced early in November that he intended to visit the site in Guyana in an attempt to learn just what the situation was down there. Earlier, in May, a freelance writer named Kathy Hunter was unsuccessful in her attempts to interview Jim Jones. She stated that she was followed around Georgetown and was harrassed by members of Jones' organization. Ryan felt that his going to Jonestown contained a certain amount of danger, but that it was necessary. He and twenty others left San Francisco on November 13 and, after landing at Georgetown, had to spend

several days negotiating before being allowed to visit the commune on November 17.

The fact-finding committee was treated to one of Jones' charades on the first day's visit with everyone in the compound on their best behavior during a festival. After spending the night in Port Kaituma, the party returned to a somewhat unmasked group and the events deteriorated rapidly from that point onward. According to news sources, Ryan's opinion of the make-shift town in the jungle was that some of the people seemed to want to stay, but there were many who did not. Jim Jones himself seemed to be confused; his answers to questions were contradictory and evasive. Sometimes he was angry and irritated about Ryan's awareness that many of his flock wanted to leave.

"People play games," he told the party. "They lie." About the beatings, which had been an issue in San Francisco, Jones admitted to them when he pointed out to reporters that the Temple had not had any beatings in many months, and that restriction of privileges was the mode of punishment used in Jonestown.

He claimed that the United States government had given him a hard time. He took pills all the while the Congressman's party was there and was apparently dazed by them. *Chronicle* correspondent Ron Javers believed that Jones was a madman. To cap an already difficult interview, one of the members of the cult attacked Ryan with a knife

which was grabbed by Jones' attorneys Charles Garry and Mark Lane. Ryan was unhurt in the attack, although his assailant was cut in the scuffle. It was at that point that the party boarded a truck to be driven to the airport.

The attack at the Port Kaituma airstrip took place at about 4:30 P.M. as the group was beginning to board the Guyana Airways 24-place Otter for the trip back to the capitol at Georgetown. A half a dozen men, armed with rifles and shotguns, pulled up to the waiting aircraft in a flat trailer hauled by a tractor and opened fire on Ryan's group. The other plane, a single-engine Cessna, managed to take off during the massacre but the Otter remained, its boxy fusilage sheltering the slain.

After a terror-ridden night for the survivors in Port Kaituma which was deluged by a tropical storm, Guyanese troops arrived to secure the airstrip and march on the site of Jonestown. They found over four hundred bodies of cult members, including Jones.

Why?

All over America that same simple question is being asked by everyone—and perhaps the answer, the true answer, died with the bullet in Jim Jones' right temple in the compound at Jonestown. There are, naturally, dozens of answers, some true perhaps, some not so true. Jim Jones was something of a paradox wrapped in a riddle. He was a man of dynamic power capable of organizing a religious

group of over 20,000 members and carrying a lot of them to the jungles with him, even if it meant their leaving wives, husbands and children.

He was a man apparently grown paranoid, possessed with the idea that his people must be prepared for nuclear war, or the onslaught of official accusations into his Peoples Temple. He was a man who espoused the causes of politicians. Jones and his group worked long hours writing letters and campaigning for them. He championed the cause of the American Indian and of the poor—both blacks and whites. Finally, in the face of growing problems in San Francisco, he leased 27,000 acres in Guyana to create a new "promised land" for his followers.

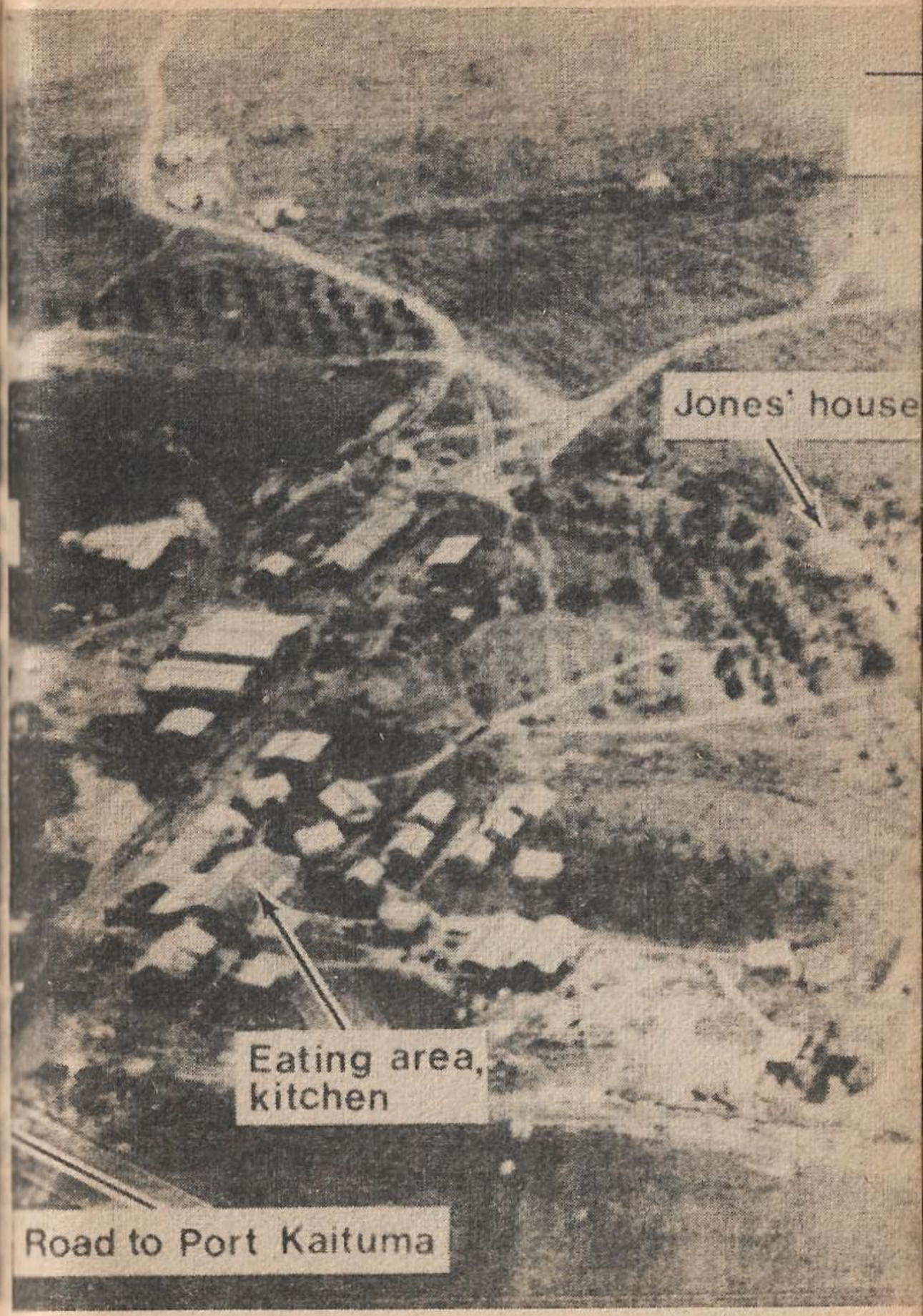
Jones had developed from a community-minded man to a frightened, paranoid dictator who organized suicide drills for those around him, using his charismatic power over his group in an invitation to death.

Perhaps his fears of the destruction of Jonestown were real. Perhaps not.

It is a fact that the population of his jungle utopia was decimated by violence—yet it is also a fact that this violence came by his own hand, not by outsiders.

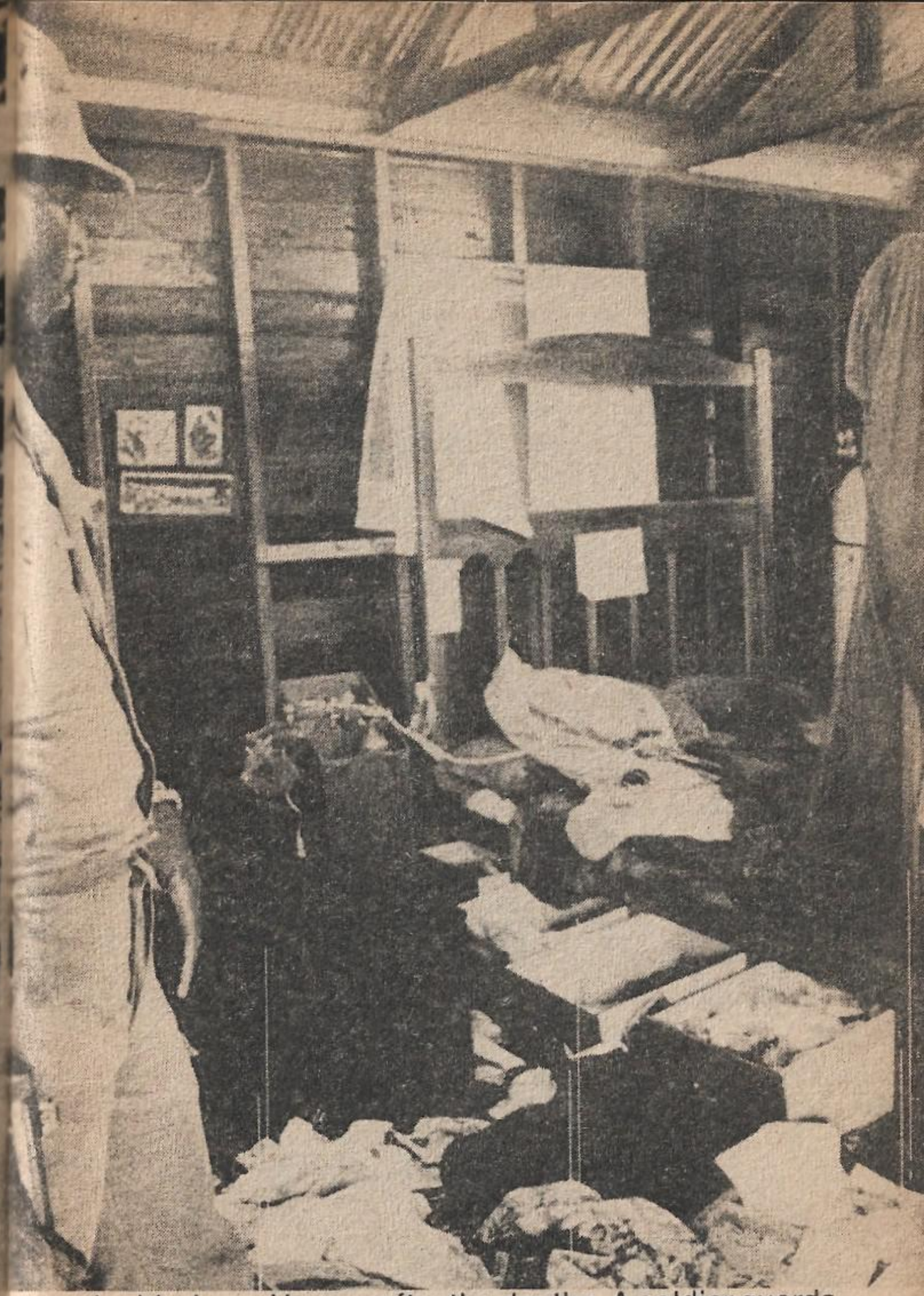
Rev. Jim Jones, leader of the Peoples Temple cult. UPI

Jonestown, Guyana: the scene of the mass suicide of over 900 members of the Peoples Temple. UPI



Aerial view of Jonestown. It was to be Jones' utopia in the jungle. UPI

A Guyanese soldier carrying an automatic weapon stands at the rear stairs of Jones' house in Jonestown following the mass suicide. UPI



Inside Jones' house after the deaths. A soldier guards the doorway of Jones' bedroom. Oxygen bottles flank the bloodstained bed, and Jones' clothing and possessions are strewn around the room as if it were looted. UPI

The FBI released the contents of a sealed note found on the body of Jones. It appeared likely it was a suicide note a follower wrote to Jones. UPI

Jim Jones in 1954, age 22, when he was pastor of the Christian Assembly of God Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. Here he holds two monkeys that were sold in a fund-raising project for the congregation. Jones apparently formed the Peoples Temple in Indianapolis before he moved it to California and eventually to Guyana. UPI

Jim Jones in a photo taken in 1976. UPI

Creation of a Cult of Brutality

CHAPTER TWO

Jim Jones, a native of Indiana, referred to himself as part Indian and founded a fundamentalist church in that state as early as his eighteenth birthday. Born in 1931, he grew up in Lynn, Indiana.

It is in Lynn that the tragic tale of the Rev. Jim Jones begins.

Lynn is the home of 900 people who go to its neat white churches. It was Klan country, too. Black people were nervous about showing their faces after sundown.

A porched white frame house with a backyard of pets and fowl was the Jones place. Father James Sr., disabled vet, part-time rail hand, quiet, often absent. Mother Lynette, factory worker, devoted Democrat and Methodist, fiery in defense of her only son.

Jim had a penchant for religion and political dabblings. He opened a small church in Indianapolis in 1953 and sold monkeys to raise money for it. He was not ordained until 1964 as a Disciples of Christ minister.

During the early 1960's Jones served as a missionary in Brazil, a background which served him well when he applied for leased acreage in Guyana. When he returned to the United States in 1963 he called his church The Peoples Temple Full Gospel Church, a title later shortened to the Peoples Temple.

The Reverend Jim Jones was a good looking man, a man with the power to captivate church audiences with his views, but a man who felt that a nuclear holocaust was lurking just over the political horizon. In the '60's this kind of viewpoint wasn't exactly alien to the American population. Fallout shelters were everywhere and Civil Defense heads discussed all manner of ways to escape the obvious confrontation with the Russians.

Jones never lost that thought. Perhaps it was the first inkling of the paranoia that seemed to haunt him throughout his ministry. A faith healer, Jones laid claim to curing all manner of sicknesses, including raising people from the dead. This kind of crusade among the Indianapolis citizenry caused considerable flack to be thrown his way by local newspapers. Jones resented their handling of his church and claimed that the city was "racist."

In 1965, Jones took a hundred of his followers both black and white and moved west to California, where Charles Manson once held sway over his cult. Settling in Redwood Valley near the town of Ukiah, it was his contention at the time that the area would be safe from a nuclear blast. Here, in the wine country of northern California, Jones began to set up the organization that would become a controversial group in politics, the news media and religion.

In 1971, Jones bought the San Francisco temple building on Geary and another in Los Angeles, beginning the tentacles of his California operation. To these centers he also added Fresno and Bakersfield. Within ten years the assets of the Peoples Temple were $1.5 million in real estate holdings throughout the state.

By the time the 1975 elections rolled around, Jones was at the peak of his power, working for various political candidates with the entire congregation behind him. The first bit of flack against the temple came in the late summer of 1977 when the news media began to probe into the tightly knit organization, beginning with a story in *New West* Magazine. Ex-members of the temple claimed that Jones had followers beaten as a disciplinary measure, faked healings and bilked the congregation out of millions of dollars.

The controversy has continued, and probably will continue for some time. Jim Jones, it would seem, became the kind of man one either hated, or

loved—at least until November 18. The people who stayed with his organization had to be what Eric Hoffer called "the true believers."

San Francisco columnist Herb Caen wrote: "If he was a con man, he was masterful at it..."

It would seem, from the evidence that has come to light in recent weeks, that Jim Jones was not only a masterful con man, but a man whose instability grew on a grand tapestry until the bitter end. It would take someone who had been close to Jones throughout his life to determine the truth of what worked in his mind. If he was conning the world at the outset of his career, it was not evident to even those closest to him until the latter years.

A quiet, soft spoken man, he kept to himself and his congregation during the early period in San Francisco. His apparent aim was the rehabilitation, through his church, of the poor, the down trodden and the addicts of the city. His flock were the desperate and the underpriviledged. Jones spoke seriously about helping these people.

A former member stated that at one time she would have killed for Jones. There are others, she said, who are willing to do the same.

With all the thousands of words written about Jim Jones and his rise to power, no one has come up with a kind of yardstick by which to measure the man. Anyone can go through life, say a little left of center, without becoming responsible for mass murders. On the other hand, a Charles Manson can

develop into a mindless killer who seeks murder and evil as answers to his paranoia.

For a congregation, most of whom haven't had much chance in society, the church, no matter whose, is a refuge and a crutch to shut out the world of the street. It is reasonable to believe that Jim Jones saw this during his tenure in San Francisco. He was "father" to the thousands who attended his sermons, and the power of his creation was heady wine. God complex? An ego so self-centered that he felt the ends justified the means no matter what the cost?

There is no incident in history that can be used as a parallel to the rise and fall of Jim Jones.

His actions during his stay in San Francisco speak as clearly as anything about his mind. He had acquired absolute control over his followers, a control that was evident in the 1975 elections. At his command, thousands of his people knocked on doors, passed leaflets and wrote letters supporting the candidate of "father" Jim's choice.

He was in control.

Jones was always linked with the political structure of whatever area his church was located, thus winning political appointments regularly. Tim Reiterman, one of the men at the Guyana ambush, together with Nancy Dooley, both of the San Francisco *Examiner* staff, interviewed disgruntled members of the Peoples Temple in August of 1977

and printed a report on how the Reverend handled his end of the election campaign.

A call to the members of the congregation informed the people how to vote, and for whom, in the election. The congregation was also required to do a lot of legwork in an effort to get out the vote. Letter writing to government officials was another part of the church's activities during that period. The Reiterman-Dooley story quoted former member Gary Lambrev:

"Everybody was involved, even those who were barely literate. If there was any opposition, such as an unfavorable article, everybody would be mobilized. In general, though, we were writing to anybody who might be of help in the future for a character witness—anybody from a judge in Missoula, Mont., to an ecologist...

"The goal was to get a congratulatory letter or telegram and to file it for future use."

This particular ploy worked well and is an example of the far thinking that Jim Jones' mind had reached during that period. The Guyana project had undoubtedly been in his mind from the time of his missionary days in South America. But one does not take a band of followers into a foreign country without the endorsement of people higher up on the political scale than a city councilman. Those letters continued while Jones exercised his power in the local political arena of San Francisco.

Jones' battery of endorsements from the country's high ranking political figures did much to convince the Guyana officials that the Peoples Temple was of a high caliber. Minister of State in Guyana, Christopher Nascimento, pointed out that he didn't want people to think that "we allowed a bunch of crazies into Guyana."

The faithful of San Francisco, who at the time of the early to mid-70's numbered around 3,000, were told what to write in support, or non-support, of various political issues. They were instructed to use such diversions as different colored pens, different envelopes and to vary their writing styles. For signatures, they made up names or took scrambled names from the phonebook.

Photography, especially rigged, was another facet of the Jim Jones political spider web. He had his own temple photographer as well as various aides to appear in the picture. By the use of one of the members clenching a fist in the background an official whom Jones didn't like could be made to look like an activist. None of these photos were ever used to discredit anyone, but they were there.

In the early days in San Francisco, Jones and his Peoples Temple worked for such people as Angela Davis and American Indian leader Dennis Banks. Later, as his political arm reached out, Jones espoused the cause of Mayor George Moscone, District Attorney Joseph Freitas and Assemblyman Willie Brown, Jr.

His efforts paid off—or at least the efforts of his people paid off. In 1976, Jones was named to the San Francisco Housing Authority by the man he'd helped to elect, Mayor George Moscone. Jones' lawyer Timothy Stoen was hired by District Attorney Joseph Freitas.

Mayor Moscone pointed out that at the time of his appointing Jim Jones to the authority, he had believed that the minister was "a peacemaker" and stated that he was very good with people. District Attorney Freitas concurred with the Mayor, labeling Jones as "OK" during the time he knew him. Jones became chairman of the authority in February with a salary of $25.00 per meeting—not much, at first glance. But three other temple members also worked for the local government, hired in August and September. Jean Brown was hired at a salary of $15,496 a year to head training programs. Vera Young received $9,256 for secretarial work, and Caroline Layton was hired as Brown's assistant at a salary of $14,420 per year.

Although Jones' city money wouldn't buy a week's groceries, disgruntled ex-temple members have stated that the church often took as much as forty percent of the faithful's earnings. That being the case, the combined salaries of the girls would put over $15,000 in the church's coffers.

And the church's coffers were certainly beginning to expand. By various means, the temple had raised enough money to begin clearing the ground of the

future site of Jonestown in South America and to start constructing homes for those who were to journey to "the promised land" with their "father."

With the flack from the media that began in the fall of 1977, relatives of those now in Guyana began to protest to the temple about what might be termed a "stalag situation" in Jonestown. In April 1978, these people presented a petition to the temple concerning what they believed was a violation of "Human Rights", which included a prohibition of telephone calls and visits along with an alleged censoring of mail between the people in the states and those in Jonestown.

The petition fell upon deaf ears as far as the jungle community was concerned. Jones' attorney in San Francisco, Charles Garry (Attorney Timothy Stoen had since left Jones' employ and house) derided the accusations of the stateside group, who called themselves "Concerned Parents." Garry said that the Guyana group "don't want a goddam thing to do" with their relatives. He added, though, that anyone who wanted to leave the newly built community was free to do so.

In the fall of 1978 a Washington lawyer, Mark Lane, was invited to look into the situation and returned with the belief that everything was fine. He claimed that every agency in the United States, from the F.B.I. to the Postal Service, was hindering the progress of the colony based on the ridiculous motives that the success of the operation was an

embarrassment to the United States. He claimed that a group of men, led by an employee of Interpol, had attempted an attack on the commune without success, and that money to finance this venture had been "laundered" through banks in foreign neutral countries.

The "battle", if it could be called such, totally lacked military procedure, an ordinary Pfc would have trouble understanding just what had been attempted by this group of "wild geese." According to Lane, who was told by the nameless Interpol agent leading the twenty men, they had been sent to knock out the colony's generator unit after cutting through the barbed wire and mines surrounding the Jonestown site. Then, in the darkness, they were to free the children from the compound.

Unfortunately, the patrol found neither mines nor barbed wire around the compound and so had to content themselves with sniping at the area for six days.

Either their leader was a knothead, if there was such an attack, or Mr. Lane had been duped. The patrol, upon finding no barbed wire or minefields, should have either knocked out the generator and completed their mission (God knows how they expected to find children in the dark). If they believed that it was *not* a place of confinement, they should have headed back into the jungle. Instead, the counselor says they hung around sniping at the compound. At what? The children they didn't have

the guts to go get? The irony of the mission was revealed when Jim Jones invited their leader behind the gates for a visit. He stayed for several days—while the rest of the gang apparently remained outside with the snakes and the leopards.

Somehow, this so-called "attack" on the colony smacked of another of Jim Jones' put-on paranoia sieges, which by this time were becoming regular. However, Lane's story was corroborated by four of the temple's personnel as well as by Jones' wife, Marceline, who said that her husband had remained in the jungle on the advice of his attorneys and because his presence was needed there.

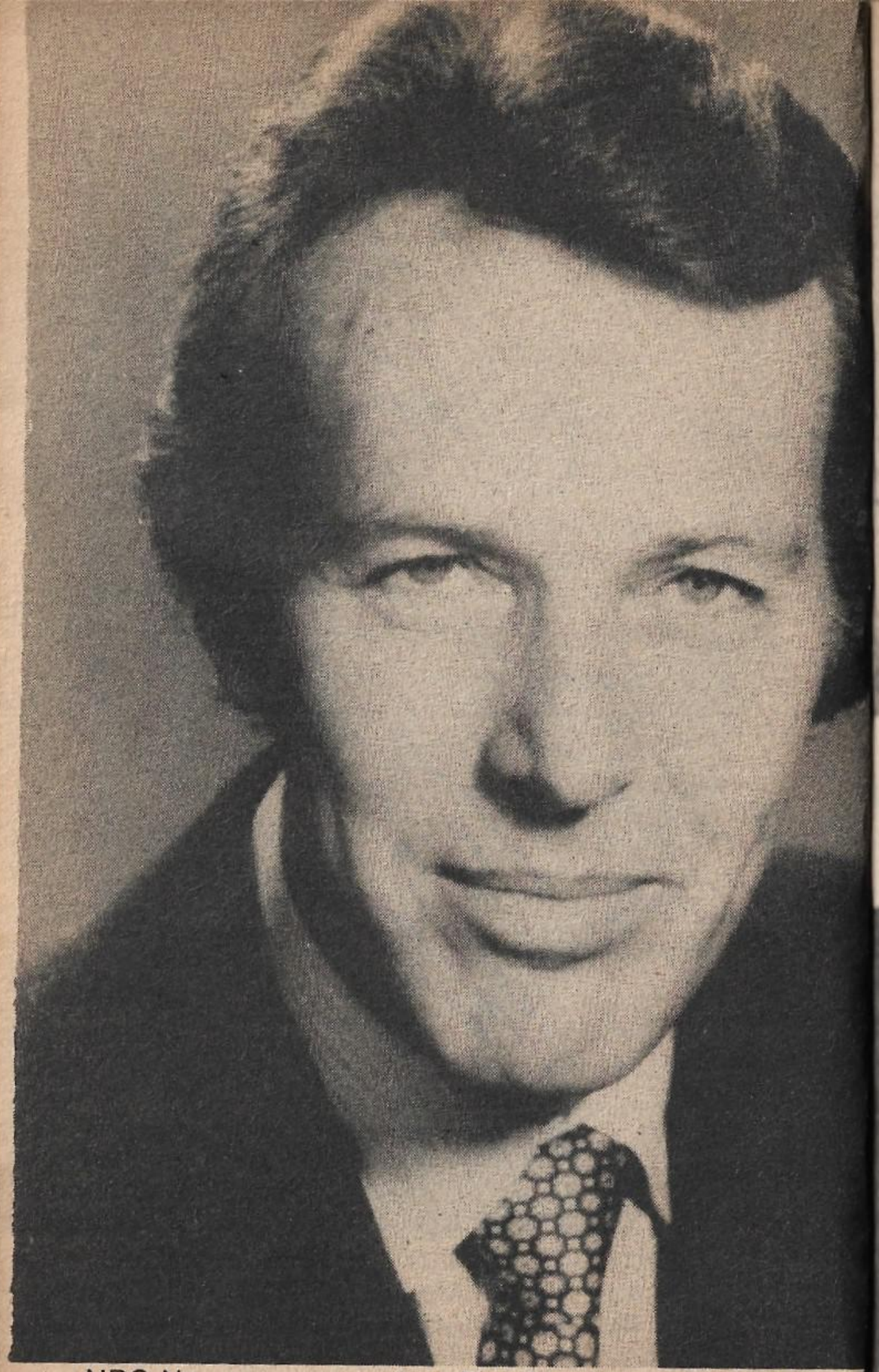
A year earlier, however, temple spokesman Mike Prokes had informed newsmen that when the Reverend returned to the United States he would not answer the charges that had been leveled against him by such groups as the Concerned Parents because in doing so he would "play into the hands" of his accusers.

Apparently Jim Jones didn't have the answers set up to appear before his accusers and so had elected to remain with the faithful.

Lane at the time, it was stated, was determined to lodge a suit against every government agency in the United States with the possible exception of the President's Plan for Emergency Preparedness.

Nothing was heard of these actions.

Rep. Leo Ryan (D-Cal.). On a fact-finding tour to check reports that Americans were being kept prisoner at the Peoples Temple in Guyana, Ryan was shot and killed with four other members of his party in an ambush at a landing strip outside Jonestown. The ambush began the tragedy. UPI



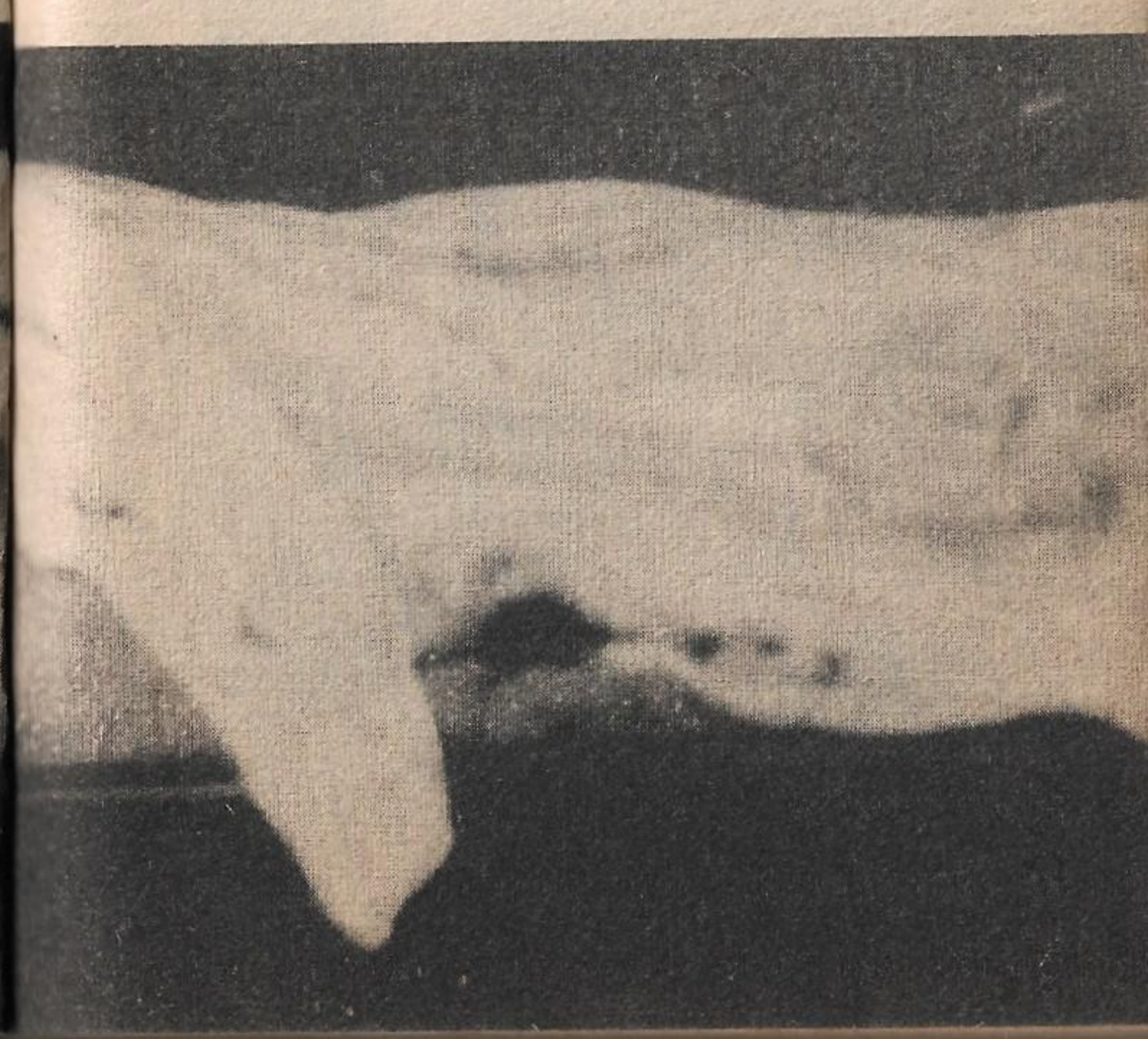
NBC News correspondent Don Harris, also killed in the airstrip ambush. UPI

NBC cameraman Robert Brown, another victim of the ambush. UPI

Greg Robinson, San Francisco *Examiner* photographer, was also shot and killed on the airstrip. UPI

The body of Rep. Ryan lies on a stretcher in a Georgetown, Guyana morgue shortly after an autopsy. UPI

A number of suspects in the airstrip massacre are hustled into military jeeps at Georgetown airport. The suspects were flown here from the remote jungle town of Jonestown. UPI



Suspects in custody: Michael Prokes (dark T-shirt), 31, of Stockton, California, a former San Francisco evangelist; and Larry Layton (white T-shirt), 32, a former U.S. Marine from Garden City, Idaho, a high-ranking member of the Peoples Temple. UPI

"We Are a Non-violent People"

CHAPTER THREE

In the aftermath of any dictatorial reign of terror, there are those remaining who stumble about in stunned disbelief and bitter anger. After the last blows are dealt by what is left of the structure's "elite" corps, the refugees huddle together until the reality of normal existence returns. As the news of the terrible mass suicides (some called it mass murders) in Guyana flooded the Peoples Temple in San Francisco, the remaining members of Reverend Jim Jones' operation of terror clammed up behind their fenced in building.

Boxes and drums, marked for Jonestown, stood like mute sentinels behind the fence. Members who refused to talk to the press, or grieving relatives,

were constantly present to guard what had now become almost a dead horse. Relatives of those members in Jonestown clustered around the tall hurricane fence trying desperately to obtain news of their people. They received nothing, nor did the news media. Finally, in the face of the anger of the gathered people, Archie Ijames, Temple spokesman, offered this statement:

"The members of Peoples Temple denounce the violence that has taken place at the Port Kaituma airstrip near Jonestown in Guyana. We are non-violent people. It is not the kind of action anyone within the temple would ever precipitate.

"We also wholly deny the charge of intention to commit mass suicide. The charge is patently untrue."

Many of the temple's ex-members refused to believe such statements, including Jim Jones' one-time son-in-law, Michael Cartmell. Gathered at various homes, or at such places as the Human Freedom Center in Berkeley, they feared assassination by what they said were around two hundred "Angels", a group of hit men and women, who were to put Jim Jones' final bit of the master plan into operation.

Suffering from a growing sense of persecution and paranoia, Jones told his followers that in the event of an attack on the church, or on himself, the faithful were to murder their children first and then poison themselves. A kind of assassination team had been organized to kill anyone who disobeyed. An

attack force was also slated to kill high members of the government. The fruits of this plan, at least partially carried out, were horribly evident at Jonestown.

Preliminaries to Jim Jones' November tragedy had their beginnings in the mid-70's when temple members were given wine in paper cups, then were told that they had taken poison and would be dead within a half an hour. When a woman protested that she did not want to die she was "shot" with a revolver containing blanks. Another member who protested was beaten by his colleagues because he had dared to dispute their "father's" word.

"Slowly he trapped us," one ex-member reported in the Oakland *Tribune*, "brainwashed us, to a point where we couldn't leave the church."

These drills became regular occurrences at the Peoples Temple, with the "law" enforced by the so-called Angels, and an enormous number of the people accepted the idea—if not at first, then later through repetition.

Dale Van Avery, in his four volume history of the frontier people, pointed out that stark terror becomes less terrible with repetition. People, he wrote, learn to live on the slopes of a volcano. In the closing days of World War II, young Japanese pilots hurled their Kamakaze Zero fighters willingly at U.S. ships in a futile bid for glory and the cause of Japan.

There is a nobility in man, a dedication and

firmness of purpose, that elevates him greatly on the scale of life. Yet, when this quality is distorted by a magnetic madman such as the Reverend Jim Jones, Charles Manson or Adolf Hitler, the sensation becomes difficult to handle, if not totally impossible. It shows itself in the rage of mob rule, in riots or in the blind obedience to someone like "Heavenly father" Jones. If this reaction is indeed insanity, then this insanity lies within all of us.

To compare Jim Jones to Charles Manson or Adolf Hitler (which has been done) would fall way short of the mark. There is, however, a thread of "common evil" that permeates the character of these men. Politically and socially they aligned themselves with groups beyond the edges of society and they were acutely aware of the standards of their time. People join causes because of what can be gained from them, or from a sense of belonging that transcends the misery of their present mode of existence.

Adolf Hitler's Germany, when he ripped off his corporal's chevrons in 1918, after World War I, was a country stripped of whatever dignity it had prior to the treaty of Versailles. People were in a suppressed and poverty-stricken state, without jobs or hope under the post-war administration of Bismarck. Although it took a few years, plus an alliance with a group of seedy, cruel and sadistic men, the German people were ready for anyone who could show them a better way. It took Hitler, with his fantastic

personality and his dynamic speeches, to mesmerize the nation into a unit.

Manson and Jones chose a somewhat easier route. Both adopted the "church" idea. Hitler would have recoiled at such pretense but he would have conceded that a cause, of some sort, is necessary to the advancement of power.

Power can become absolute, to the point where even the person wielding it can't control it. There are times when it seems to be a force of its own—and it is seldom smart to trust it to just anyone. Charles Manson ordered one of his girls, for example, to bring him a coconut, even if she had to go to Rio to get it. The girl got up and started away. She probably would have gone all the way had he not called her back. Hitler, in maniacal rages, threw away entire armies in Russia. The Reverend Jim Jones passed out wine and told his people that it was poison.

Power.

Jim Jones, Charles Manson and Adolf Hitler could not have had any sort of power if it weren't for people believing their lies. No one can be the king of the chicken house, if there are no chickens.

Jones had them, and he was smart enough to offer them the things they lacked in society. From the early days in Indianapolis, Jim Jones was a champion of the underdog and the downtrodden. His church fed as many as a thousand people in a week, and his knowledge of these folks came to the fore in San Francisco. Jones gave the old "mission"

idea a different twist; feed the multitudes and make them listen to the sermon—but at the Peoples Temple the sermon was absolute hero worship. Obedience.

Unfortunately, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link and the longer the chain, the more chances there are for weak links. Jones' chain began snapping in 1977 in a rapid succession of broken links.

Defectors from the group began to speak out in a strong voice, telling news people of the problems of the Peoples Temple. The spearhead was a *New West* magazine article by Marshall Kilduff and Phil Tracy. The local newspapers picked it up from there, their reporters hot on the scent of stories that would eventually break down the tyrannical web of the Peoples Temple.

How does an Indiana boy, James Warren Jones, a graduate of Butler University, rise to control the lives and the destinies of a reported 20,000 people?

Like a Hitler, for example, he had to give a people something they sincerely need. In his first church, in Indianapolis, Jones ran a soup kitchen as well as a religious center to spread his propaganda. However, in fleeing to the "atomic bomb proof" Redwood Valley in California's Mendocino County, the "beans and prayers" minister became more of a dictator.

His church near Ukiah, and the one in the Fillmore district of San Francisco, became the beginnings of the tragedy that would culminate in the jungle of Guyana years later.

Although few knew the facts about the Peoples Temple during those years, and even fewer cared, Jim Jones was building a religion of fear that would entrap thousands of men, women and children. It was as phony as a three dollar bill and the faithful ate it up.

Jones was a "healer" according to his claims, but the entire thing was a farce. During a sermon at one of his churches a woman fell to the floor. Members rushed to her side and she was pronounced dead. Jones leaped to the aisle, knelt beside her and immediately brought her back to life before continuing his pulpit tirade.

On another occasion, prior to leaving on a trip to Seattle, Washington, at the beginning of the 70's, Jones stepped from the door of his house (among people waiting outside, for effect) and was gunned down by a hidden assassin. Blood splattered all over, witnesses said, and the congregation screamed and cried. Jones was helped back into the house from where he later reappeared in clean clothes, looking his usual handsome self. He had miraculously "cured" himself, much to the delight of those who were wringing their hands over his "death."

I wonder who fired the blank cartridge at him, and who the lady was that he brought back from

death. Did the "Angels" threaten them with a real bullet if they didn't go along with "father's" scheme?

Jones was good with cancer as well. For a man who could raise the dead, curing cancer posed no problem. The cancerous person, usually a woman, would be taken to the restroom by Jones' wife Marceline, perform ritual incantations and then Marceline would emerge holding the "cancer" which had passed. Applause and the screams of the audience would greet the cured woman as she came back to the stage.

It was a good act—except that the "cancers" amounted to little more than chicken guts neatly wrapped in paper and used on the patient with a bit of sleight of hand on the part of the wife.

Birdie Marable, another ex-member, said; in the *New West* article of August 1, 1977, "I never really thought he was God, like he preached, but I thought he was a prophet."

Birdie, perhaps, was echoing what other members thought of the Rev. Jim Jones because despite the accusations by former members in the various press publications, his clout continued to grow. That was a necessary part of Jones' program because he had come to San Francisco to "make it to the big time" and that entailed a congregation he could control absolutely, plus a chance to ingratiate himself into the political circle.

Discipline was also necessary to keep the congregation together as a unit and to maintain the

ego of their leader. Jones couldn't have members flogged with the cat while hanging from the rafters, but correction was necessary if he were to keep the tight controls on his flock that he had to maintain.

It started lightly, by comparison to how it ended, with humiliation being the purge to cleanse the soul and assure that the member would try harder. A member might be called to stand before the congregation and be humiliated verbally. Later "father" Jones would single out the person, wrap his benevolent arm about him and tell the person that this sort of chastisement would make them a better human being in the future. This kind of abuse was geared to keep the member on his toes, and naturally others were inclined to try harder to do their part in the Peoples Temple if only to avoid being embarrassed in public.

Jones had read his World War II German tactics, when it came to controlling his flock. "Divide and Conquer," Hitler's method of jamming a spearhead into a fortified position in his typical blitzkrieg manner, was the same tactic used by Jones. Instead of aiming his barbs at a country or an army, his style was to divide the family and its members.

He often pitted husband against wife, capitalizing on the domestic squabbles that inhabit every home. These were then used as a method whereby Jones could verbally punish the members of his flock, automatically forcing them into trying to do better.

Unfortunately for the members of the Peoples

Temple Jones was not satisfied with his method of punishment often meted out for ridiculous reasons. Not paying enough attention in church, for example. His tactics shifted to beatings. At first they were what might be called spankings for minor infractions of rules, but they gradually deteriorated into beatings on an approximate parallel with which Jones himself deteriorated.

Eric Hoffer, in his brilliant work, *The True Believer*, stated: "To maintain itself, a mass movement has to order things so that when the people no longer believe, they can be made to believe by force."

Jones used force, at first a minor variety, but later the mild embarrassments became physical spankings. These, quite naturally, evolved into force with a heavier hand with many members of the flock being paddled until they "couldn't sit down for a week."

The purpose behind all these disciplinary measures has a relatively logical reason. To humiliate a member in front of his peers, after he has believed that the humiliator is an important personage, creates within the victim a desire to do better within the organization. At the very least such maneuvering would cause the victim *not* to become a victim again.

At first glance, this whole idea seems ridiculous to most of us. In fact, a good deal of the American population would be inclined to level "father" with a damned good right cross. This was not the case with the people of Jim Jones' flock. When members

decided that the game had gone far enough, they simply left the church very quietly and stayed low.

If the people were willing to subscribe to this type of "religion", which naturally was developed over a long period of time, Jones amplified the treatment.

The advantages of such maneuvering was to divide the members against themselves, and create an aura of distrust among even husbands and wives. Jones knew that the average household was full of squabbles. These squabbles would mean nothing to anyone but those involved, but such anger could be capitalized on simply by airing it among the group. A wife, for example, who was angry with her husband for not mowing the grass, could mention it and let the old man take the brunt of ridicule.

The object of this entire fantastic ordeal was to sow the seeds of dissent among those involved. Then Jones, with the sweetness of Christian love dripping from him, would wrap a benevolent arm about the victim and tell him some sort of nonsense such as that he was loved and that he was a son of God, etc. All 'round good fellow, Jones, would be the picture presented and the incident would be dropped. However, a certain amount of love (no matter how small) would be transferred from the victim's spouse to the "father" of the organization.

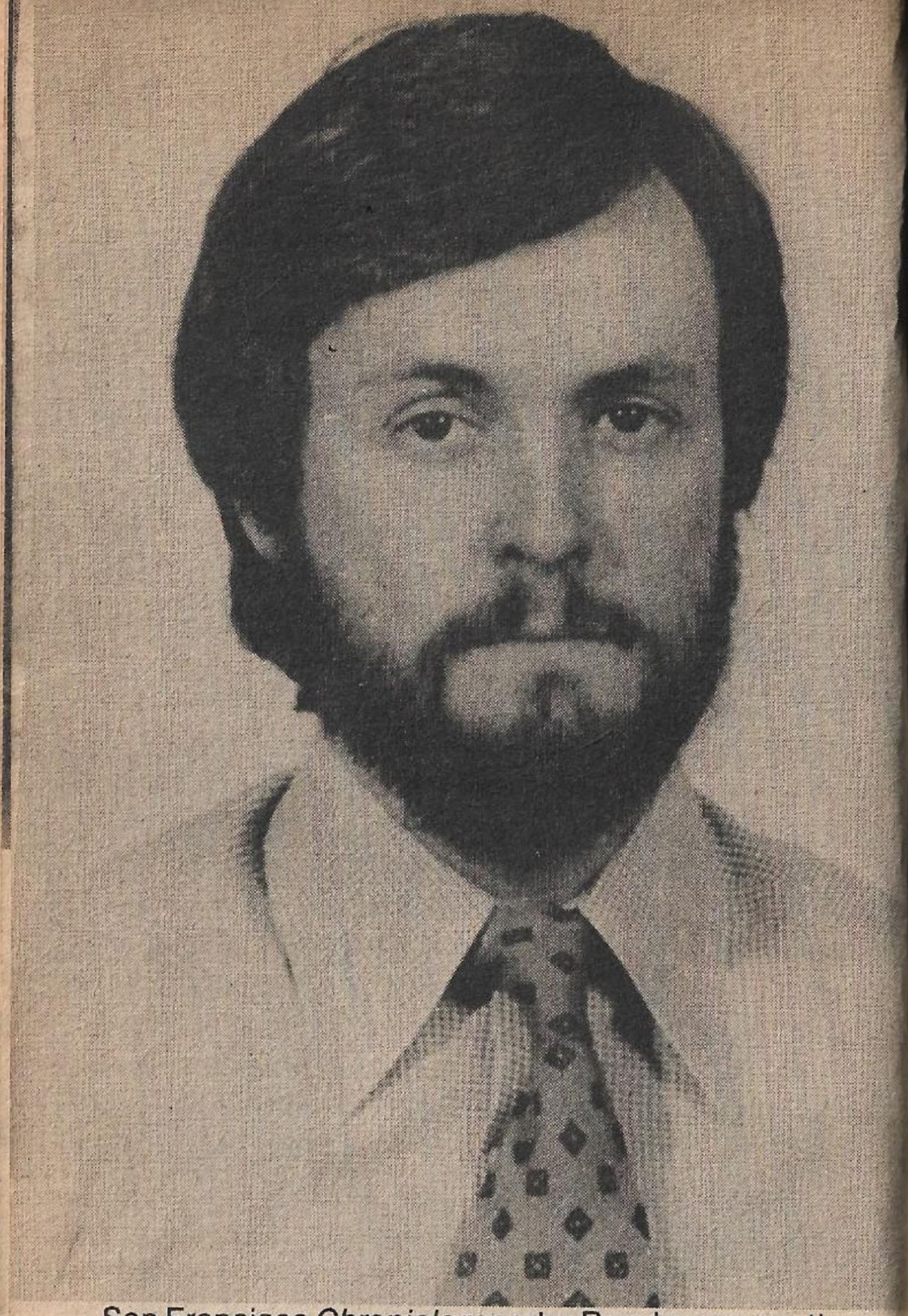
Jones had other ways of keeping his flock in a state of agitation besides humiliating them before the congregation or spanking them. If a youngster failed to show the proper respect to "father" Jones,

he could be put in a ring, usually with a larger boy, and in the one-sided boxing match that ensued the victim would learn his lesson.

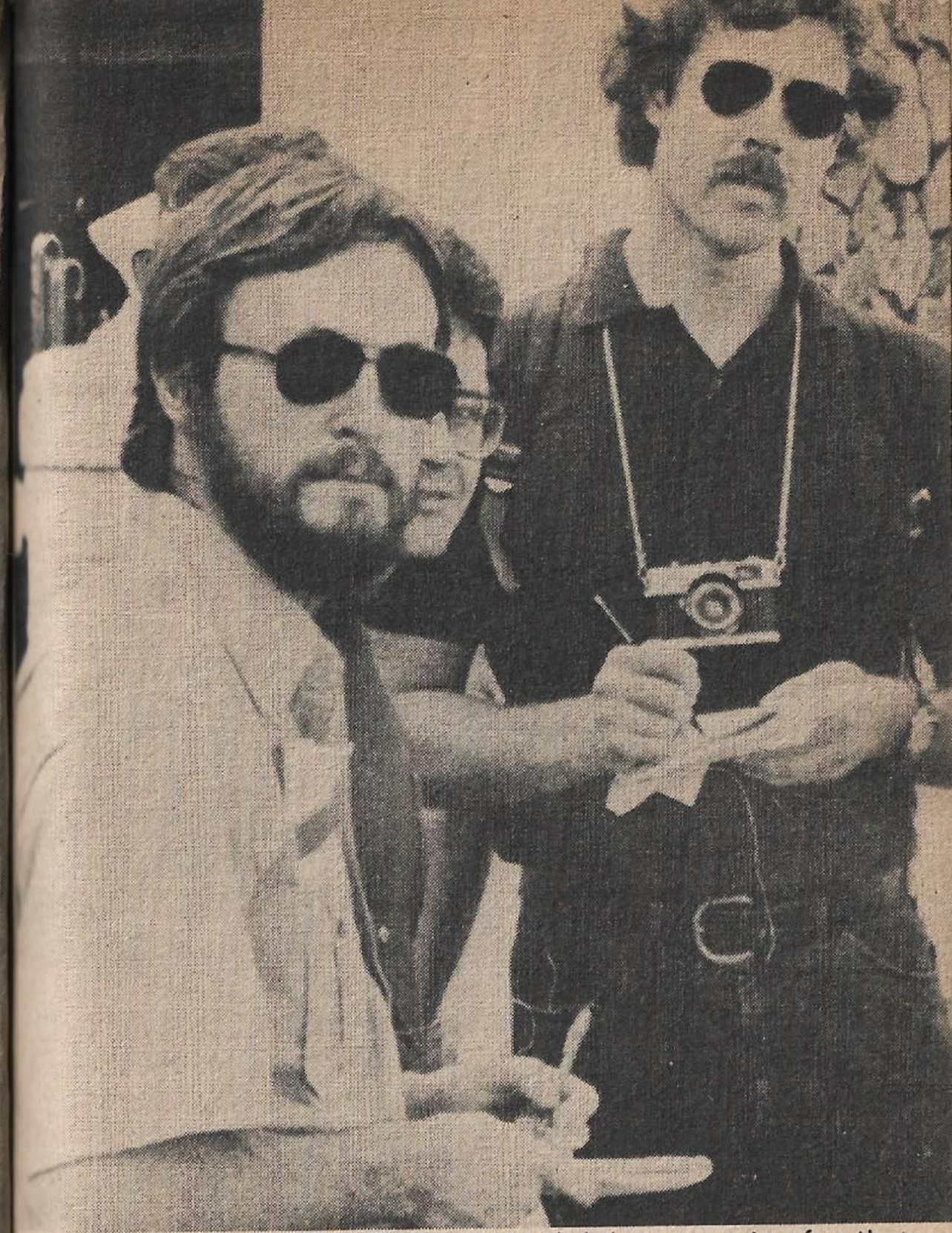
A survivor of the ambush: Jackie Speier, an aide to Rep. Ryan, is taken from a plane at Georgetown after its arrival from the airstrip. UPI

Another survivor: Steven Sung, an NBC soundman, smiles as he waits to be unloaded from a bus at Andrews AFB, Maryland, where some of the wounded victims were flown following the ambush. UPI

In San Francisco, James Cobb, Jr., who was with Ryan's party at the airstrip, tells how he survived the attack. UPI



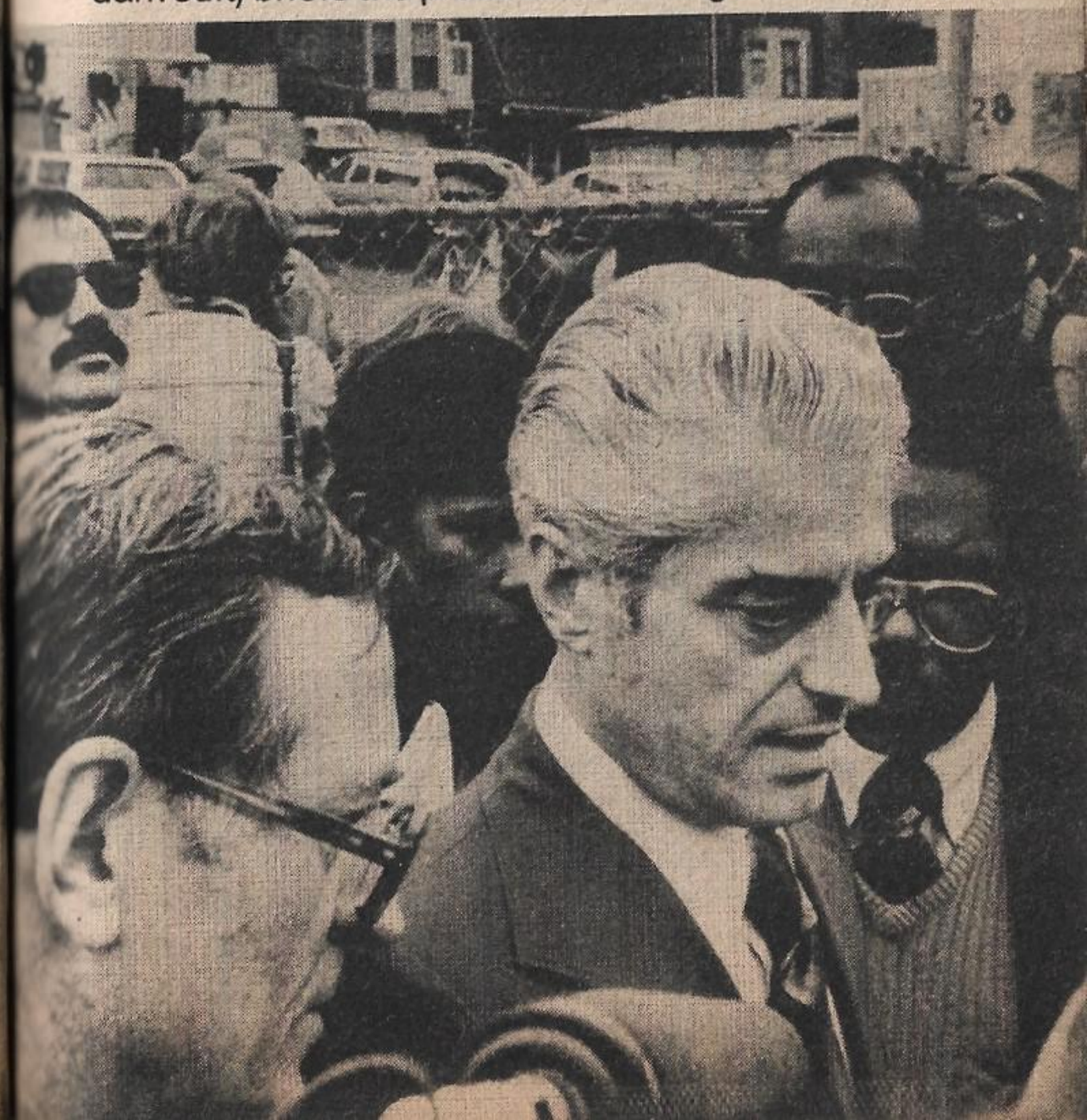
San Francisco *Chronicle* reporter Ron Javers, another eyewitness who survived the ambush. UPI



Javers with Tim Reiterman (right), a reporter for the San Francisco *Examiner* who was wounded in the attack. Javers said, "Jonestown is every evil thing that everybody thought—and worse. We knew that before the shooting started. The slaughter began at 4:20 P.M. on Saturday, November 18th, while we were standing beside the twin-engine airplane that had brought us to Jonestown on Friday and had returned to pick us up." UPI

Associate Minister of the Peoples Temple in San Francisco, Archie Ijames (center background, wearing dark suit), reads a statement denying reports that cult members will commit mass suicide following the murders of Rep. Ryan and four others at the Jonestown airstrip. The temple offered its condolences to the families of the people slain in the ambush. UPI

With the San Francisco headquarters of the Peoples Temple in the background, a S.F. police official (in dark suit) briefs the press after leaving the temple. UPI



At Rep. Ryan's burial services, Ryan's former wife, Margaret Ryan Williams (left), and his two daughters, Patricia (center) and Shannon (right), look down on the congressman's casket at the Golden Gate National Cemetery. UPI

"No Investigation of Peoples Temple Warranted"

CHAPTER FOUR

An operation the size of the one Jones was building in San Francisco and Los Angeles required money. Not the small contributions he could glean from his faith healing, and disciplinary meetings, but real money.

The Temple's method of obtaining such funds was as varied as everything else Jones had a hand in. As mentioned earlier, part of his capital came from his greatly expanded method of "tithing" his flock. His goal was to create the urge for them to hand over large sums of money to the church in blind faith.

Many of them, if not all, would donate as much as 25 and 40 percent of their earnings to the church, so that the great works of Jim Jones could continue. There were many people who literally gave their all

to the "holy cause," placing themselves in a position of dependence upon the temple.

In the Ukiah area alone, the church had accepted around thirty pieces of property listed in their records as gifts to the Peoples Temple. Many of these "gifts" smacked more of being liberated than given. Much of the church's money was acquired by the gifts of property; in an inflated economy such as the United States has been suffering, the acquisition of property, holding it, and later selling it at a handsome figure, is quite profitable.

There were, undoubtedly, a great many pieces of property actually given to the Temple by members whose faith in the program urged them to donate as much as they could to the spreading of "the word." In time, perhaps, the careful handling of such property would have given the church a good bank account. Jones didn't have the time. He wanted a large and powerful quasi-religious empire and he wanted it now. To achieve the kind of empire he wanted to build, it was necessary to be in total control of the entire flock. They had to be dependent upon him and his temple, or the whole thing might have fallen apart sooner than it did, albeit that *could* have happened with more humane results.

The Temple's financial and business dealings were as complex as their leader, and equally as effective. Members at first were asked to give ten percent of their earnings to the cause, a figure which continued to increase over the years until the church had it all.

Property, however, brought in the greatest amount of money. It has been reported that the sale of four houses alone, which were given to the temple by generous members, netted nearly a quarter of a million dollars.

In other instances, members were bilked out of their property by being persuaded to sign stacks of papers which would contain blank deeds. In an article in the San Francisco *Chronicle*, by reporter Michael Taylor, he quoted a former member as saying: "We had so many papers to sign and we really didn't understand what they were about." It was also indicated that new members were ordered to sign complicated legal forms or face a paddling.

When the people under Jim Jones' wing left for South America, they turned whatever property they owned over to the Temple as a matter of course.

Perhaps the Temple's financial records will never be sorted out. Even the buses and automobiles of the group contain registrations as complex as the rest of the operations.

Jones professed to espouse the cause of socialism throughout his career, but his son Stephan recently stated that he believed his father was a fascist. The two were in discord at the end. Stephan said that he believed his father's work was originally in the interest of his people, but that Jones became power hungry and deteriorated from there. For that, we have only the word of those who were close to him, but they may well be speaking the truth. Jim Jones'

actions of the past several years, with the terrible conclusion in the jungle, overshadow whatever good he might have accomplished. As Shakespeare wrote in *Julius Caesar*, "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones."

Hindsight is always 20-20, but it would appear that Jim Jones' career in California was part of a massive plan to accomplish a kind of social dictatorship over those who belonged to his church. The soup kitchens, the proferred help to the poor and downtrodden appear now to be the embryonic beginnings of a Reign of Terror. The voices of dissension, ignored by most in 1977, are being listened to more readily today. It might have helped a great many people in Guyana, if the accusations of ex-members would have been acted upon.

"The mayor's office does not and will not conduct any investigation into the Reverend Jones or the Peoples Temple." These were Mayor George Moscone's words of last year when *New West* magazine spearheaded a drive for investigation into the policies of the Peoples Temple. The mayor added, in the release, that the charges contained no proof that any law had been violated.

Today, in the aftermath of a bitter November, anyone can throw rocks—it will solve little or nothing.

Jones was good at covering his tracks.

* * *

Throughout the reams of paper and words that have been thrown at the public since last year an underlying current of diabolical madness is clearly visible in the operations of Jim Jones and his Peoples Temple.

There was the slow, but sure, method of alienating members of families, through spankings and humiliation, with the sole purpose of shifting affection to the church and to Jim Jones himself.

Then there was the property—whether gifts or simply stolen—which not only gave the temple the money it needed, but increased the dependence of members upon the church and its chief religious huckster. This was also true of the collection money, which was referred to in the temple as a *Commitment*. Members who could not pay the increasingly larger percentages demanded by Jones were obliged to engage in other activities to enlarge the coffers of the church. They would run bake sales or donate time, etc.

The gleaning of money from any source possible was naturally important to the cause; but in fact this ploy worked in other ways. In our society money creates freedom in the individual and freedom, in turn, creates the leisure time in which to think things out or to relax. Relaxation would be unacceptable in Jones' overall plan, and freedom could spell a total collapse of the entire system. Therefore, the simple expedient of the Temple was to separate the members from as much money as possible. This

would add to the fear, agitation and lack of trust (in anyone but Jones) which was already fomenting in rebellion against the Temple's harsh discipline.

An ex-member living in Oakland pointed out that Jones took jewelry from members, even watches, stating that the faithful didn't need them. He told them that they didn't need homes, furs or any such things of value. Diabolical logic, on his part. All he wanted the people to *need* was the temple and his august self. In the meantime, Jones continued to "heal" the sick and to "raise the dead", all to the applause of his followers.

All this, however, was not enough for Jones, nor would it be for anyone setting up such a group.

The doors to the Temple were never open to the general public. Jones was not interested in the general public. His church functioned only with a certain type of member—a member who could be a "true believer" or who was at least weak enough to be controlled. They were not "true believers" in the way Eric Hoffer wrote about them, a person compelled to join a cause, any cause, as a method whereby he could identify with something bigger than himself.

Jones himself had no intention of preaching religion to his flock. He preached *Jones* to them, referring to the Bible as the "black book." His sole ambition was to become a political manipulator and to use his members, and their money, toward those ends. If he actually *cared* about the poor and

downtrodden, the methods he used amounted to mere lip service to them in view of what he gained.

Exhaustion was another key to the plot which Jones was hatching in San Francisco. Exhausted people think irrationally, or not at all. This is a prerequisite to the brainwashing technique that "father" developed in his group. The faithful were required to go to church several times a week to listen to lengthy sermons by Jones. If a member didn't give the word the attention it deserved, he would be spanked publicly. As many as a hundred people, men and women, endured this sort of thing in a ritualistic example to others.

All the temple gatherings, of course, were in addition to the members' occupations and duties such as the gathering of votes for politicians, passing out leaflets to encourage voters or writing letters to politicians on what Jones considered important issues.

Added to this physical exhaustion on a local level, many members were required to journey to the new facility in Los Angeles which Jones had declared would net up to $25,000 during a week-end. From the churches in Ukiah, for example, followers got on buses at 5:00 P.M. Friday afternoon and drove to San Francisco for a meeting that could wind up around midnight. They would then head for Los Angeles for another six hours of services. Redwood Valley members often returned home around dawn on Monday in time to start their weekly jobs.

Exhaustion? Yes, and exhausted people pick up dissertations in the manner of sleep-learning. Like Pavlov's dogs who were taught to salivate when a bell was rung.

Jones' theme, after his enormous ego had been satisfied by the adoration of his flock, was simply money. Ex-members stated that the underlying tone of everything Jim Jones preached was money, more and more, in an insatiable quest to create a "promised land" for his people in the South American jungles.

The money *was* coming in during Jones' tenure in San Francisco. His operations to acquire it were many and usually accomplished under the guise of benevolence and love. The creation of a home for the elderly, soup kitchens and the sanctuary of the temple itself for his people seemed to overshadow the undercurrent of evil and power-hungry drive that lived with Jim Jones. He now had the obedience of his members, most of their money and the promise of a new life in a new country where he would rule them with a just hand and the greatness of his personage.

He demanded adoration. When he didn't get it, or enough of it, he would become verbally violent. Real or imagined plots against him or the church—even back in the Indiana days—were grounds for him to question suspected detractors for hours.

His attitude on the Bible, which he called the "black book," was that apparently he considered it

his most distrusted competition. "Too many people are looking at this instead of looking at me."

His paranoia, carefully controlled in the beginning, came to the fore among those involved in maintaining the Temple. The creation of his guards, which members referred to as "Angels", was an outward manifestation of the fear in which Jim Jones lived his life. He usually travelled with ten to fifteen burly men who looked after him. He also took members who bore a resemblance to him and had them dress like him in a surrounding nucleus. Dressed alike, right down to the dark glasses, these doubles, Jones believed, would make an attempt upon his life more difficult.

It was scarcely the entourage necessary for the average man of God who was working for the good of the people. Perhaps the rock and bottle throwing racists of Indianapolis had left a heavier mark upon him than one would suspect. Hardly a necessary fear in the laid-back city of San Francisco.

The guards were always there. At a luncheon for the President's wife, Rosalynn Carter, Jones flooded the hall with his people to help make it a success. As usual, his guards lined the area, big burly blacks with folded arms and all-seeing eyes, much to the confusion of the Secret Service men assigned to Mrs. Carter. Who the hell, they wondered, were those guys?

Another of Jones' methods of acquiring vast sums of money was the home for emotionally disturbed

boys, which was begun in Redwood Valley in the early 70's by the Touchette family who purchased a house and converted it into the home for the boys.

The home changed hands several times until 1974 when it was taken over by Walter and Carol Jones (no relation) at the request of Jim Jones. He pointed out that the Touchette family was in Guyana and that the couple who had replaced them were doing a poor job. In fact, it had reached the point where the home was under surveillance by the authorities.

In 1974-75 County checks were given to the home to maintain and care for the boys. These amounted to $325 and $350 per month for each child. Walter Jones stated, in the *New West* exposé by Kilduff and Tracy, that the checks were turned over to the church, which had power of attorney, and the home received an allotment of "what they felt were sufficient funds for the home and supplied us with foodstuffs and various articles of clothing."

The food, it was reported, consisted mostly of canned staples, with clothing donated by church members. The amount per month was around $2,000 of county funds. While Walter Jones wasn't certain how much the home actually received of this money he stated that it was inadequate. "I do remember," he told *New West* writers, "that there were times when all of the checks were signed over to the church."

Jim "Dad" Jones' Political Plum

CHAPTER FIVE

Within a short time after Jones' arrival in San Francisco he had developed his Temple into a force to be reckoned with. His tactics of absolute obedience, absolute dependence upon the church and absolute control over what would, or would not, be done created a power that the city could not afford to sluff off.

The harrassment of the *New West* magazine offices, even before the first stories on the Peoples Temple came out, is an example of just how much power Jones had acquired. Later in this chapter, this situation will be developed in more detail. The important thing to note here, is power.

Jones had honed his group of followers to the fine edge of devotion without question and was now

ready to move into the brighter limelight of the local political picture. This was just in time for the 1975 election campaign in which George Moscone was running for mayor, Joseph Freitas for district attorney and Willie Brown Jr. for the local assembly.

There were undoubtedly other men elected to other posts which Jones supported but offices such as those of the mayor and the district attorney were good to have on your side. The support of Willie Brown Jr. for an assembly seat was logical in view of the fact that the man was tremendously popular in his district—the district that contained the Peoples Temple.

Jim Jones and his flock threw themselves into the election with tireless energy, characteristic of the cult members, and won. The men they had supported beat their opponents for their chosen seats, with Moscone becoming the mayor of San Francisco by a little over four thousand votes. Whether or not Jones' people could have tipped the scales of the voting to win the Mayor's office by the vote margin would be hard to say, but it is certain that it was a contributing factor in Moscone's campaign.

In 1976, following the November triumph of Democrat Moscone, the mayor appointed the Reverend Jim Jones to the San Francisco Housing Authority, an agency commonly referred to as a political plum by the media. This of course has always been denied by the local politicos.

With his promotion in February to chairman of

the authority, Mayor Moscone told the *Examiner*: "I asked (Jones) to be on the Housing Authority because I thought it needed a person both sensitive and realistic. From everything I've seen, he's been a good chairman. He's kept peace and quiet over there and been responsible on important issues."

Perhaps the key phrase in the mayor's statement might be "peace and quiet." Waves are undesirable in politics, whether local or national. The rocking of the political boat seems very unnerving to the majority of politicians whose ability to swim in their own political sea is questionable.

But Jones was beginning to arouse suspicions in the summer of 1977. The good deeds of the Peoples Temple were about to be undermined by *New West* magazine and the courage of reporters like Tim Reiterman, Nancy Dooley and Don Canter. Their stories were spearheaded by the work of *Chronicle* reporter Marshall Kilduff and *New West's* contributing editor Phil Tracy, assisted by freelance newsman George Klineman.

At the time of these articles Jones was at the peak of his career. He had, through the help of his flock, achieved a powerful status in the San Francisco world of local politics and an even more powerful reign within the Peoples Temple whose locked doors bugged the media.

At the time, there was not a person who knew Jones, outside the temple, who could have predicted the violent bloodbath that was to come to pass

within the next year. Jones had ingratiated himself perfectly into the community and the political circle. He had become the "savior" of his people and the "bright new star" of the political arena—a world which pays respect to power above all else.

Journalists, the watchdogs of society, are generally not impressed by anything other than a damned good news story. "Nose for news" is not a term to be considered less than accurate, and a good reporter will go to any lengths to ferret out as much truth as possible. Tim Reiterman, with his colleagues, exemplified the highest traditions of the craft in Guyana when the quest for truth cost them in blood, pain and death.

The Reverend Jim Jones was beginning to feel the pressure of these watchdogs even before the first article was printed in *New West* magazine. He could not allow any of his ex-members to spill the beans on the empire that he was creating—both in California and in Guyana. He had to do something fast, and once more turned to the faithful of his congregation.

On June 11, two months before the *New West* article of Kilduff and Tracy blasted the minister, W.E. Barnes of the San Francisco *Examiner*, reported on the problems at the *New West* editorial offices and the storm being created by temple believers at the mere thought of an article on the Jones gang.

Jones himself talked to Northern California editor Rosalie Wright about the forthcoming article.

"I know you'll be fair," he told her. Before the siege of letters and phone calls on the beleaguered members of the *New West* staff was over, a bomb would splatter itself throughout the editorial offices of the magazine.

Conflict and "letters to the editor" are common *after* a story appears in print, but Jones wanted to beat out that custom and have his troops quash the article before birth. That was another policy of Jones, to do whatever he could to manipulate and control the media. Reporters were seldom allowed in the temple and, when they were, it was generally under the watchful eyes of guards who guided them around on a special tour.

Jones feared the press and with good reason; local journalists would have verbally nailed his hide to the barn door had they been able to penetrate the stronghold he called the Peoples Temple. Yet, for all his fear of the media he attempted to cultivate friendships among various newsmen. He tried to portray the image of the good Samaritan who shunned publicity with a gentle shyness. It was simply a cover to hide the true picture, which the media would have grasped and exploited within a couple of weeks.

To serve as a smokescreen for other nefarious deeds he gave over $4,000 to a dozen newspapers and magazines on the supposition that he supported the freedom of the press. *New West* Magazine got nothing.

An article by Jerry Burns, of the *Chronicle*, recorded a statement by one of the Temple heads concerning the gifts to the media: "As a church, we feel a responsibility to defend the free speech of the First Amendment, for without it, America would have lost freedom of conscience and the climate will become ripe for totalitarianism."

The irony of this snow-job was in all probability not hidden from many journalists.

Jones also organized heavy picket lines in the defense of several *Fresno Bee* news people in 1976 who had been jailed for refusing to divulge news sources. Earlier in 1972, he had arranged a picketing of the *Examiner's* office because of stories they had written about his "raising the dead."

Now he had *New West* magazine to worry about and his people attended to the problem with all the zest of sailors on shore leave. The barrage hit the San Francisco office of the magazine almost simultaneously with editor Rosalie Wright's decision to run Marshall Kilduff's story. The telephone rang constantly, with the callers demanding that the article be killed, after they had spent their first verbal wave in asking if *New West* knew all the good and noble things Reverend Jones had done and was doing for the community.

(This hasn't changed much as a temple theme song. On November 23, after the Guyana tragedy, one of the Temple members asked a television reporter if they were going to overlook all the good

things Jones had done, because of one incident. The reporter couldn't reply.)

When Jones called Wright, the editor offered to send Kilduff over to the temple for an interview that would run with the article. Jones declined, claiming that Kilduff was too biased. At Wright's offer of another staff member Jones chose Phil Tracy and a date was set for June 3.

Shortly after that conversation phone calls and letters began to assault both the Northern and Southern California offices of the magazine. The mail came in sacks and the phone calls were unrelenting.

At the southern office in Los Angeles, editor Frank Lalli received a call from Lt. Governor Mervyn Dymally who said that he had heard that *New West* intended to print an unfavorable story on Jones. Even Dymally asked the same question—was the magazine aware of the Reverend's good works? Everyone, it seemed, was on the phone or writing letters—or both. The first calls were of the query type but grew in hostility as the protests increased in number.

Nor were Rosalie Wright, or her southern colleague, the only ones contacted by the fanatic followers of "father" Jones. Advertisers in the magazine were called and urged to withdraw their support because of the article.

All this flap and they, the public, as yet had no idea what was even in the story. One nameless

woman called an advertiser and told him to withdraw his ads because the publication of Kilduff's story could "bust the city wide open."

A letter read: "The current editor of *New West*, although undoubtedly conscientious, does not seem to understand the precarious faith people from disadvantaged backgrounds have in the system, and their proclivity toward militant reaction to what they might perceive as an unfair or unwarranted attack."

Loosely translated, this verbal snowstorm seemed to hint at another "burn, baby, burn" situation in San Francisco instead of Los Angeles.

Wright kept her cool, stating: "I'm not ready to label that a threat, but I have to admit I feel threatened. How would you interpret militant reaction?"

The editor's interpretation of "threat" was uncannily accurate. The San Francisco office was bombed after the story came out—but the temple kept its skirts clean of any powder burns. Fortunately, no one was injured and the media spearhead successfully found a chink in the Jones armor.

Later, the Tracy-Jones interview was cancelled following the delivery of a legal letter from Fred Wurth, a San Francisco attorney, which stated four conditions under which the interview could be conducted:

"That Jones be given a list of questions 24 hours in advance of an interview.

"That he be permitted to answer verbally or in writing.

"That he be permitted to read the Kilduff piece as now written.

"That he be shown the final draft before publication."

The letter added that the magazine would be considered responsible for any damage to Jones or the Temple as a result of the publication of the article. That killed the interview.

One of the church's official spokesmen, Harriet Tropp, stated that an organized campaign against the article was false, but that the church did not want the article printed.

She said: "Calling advertisers is not the kind of thing we would ever dream of. No one has been asked to make any phone calls, not by this church officially. I know that for a fact."

Tropp added that the church felt that there was a danger to their organization by having the article printed in *New West*. "After an unfavorable article several years ago one of our temples was burned down. And there have been arson and bomb threats at all our churches over the years. We're terribly apprehensive."

The Temple spokesman went on to state that the unprinted article was said to be an attempt to have their tax-free status withdrawn, adding that one of her informers had actually seen the article and that it was a smear.

When the article *was* printed, in August, it was something to read—a bomb of its own, aimed at Jones and his temple. It called for an investigation of the Peoples Temple and its leader, Reverend Jim Jones.

Frank Lalli and Rosalie Wright stuck to their editorial guns, in the face of righteous opposition, and resolved to publish the piece: "The episode," Lalli said, "just raises my curiosity about the Rev. Jones and his organization. And it makes me more determined than ever to print a truthful, reasoned and knowledgeable article."

Although the *New West* article seemed to be the real forerunner to a summer of articles about the Peoples Temple, the previous year *Chronicle* reporter Julie Smith penned an article on Jones after an interview with him and a visit to one of the services at the church.

She too received the phone call-letter broadside that every writer seemed to get from the cult, a tactic geared to apply verbal pressure. She rewrote her story six times in an effort to be as gentle as possible because the exhaustion of the cult's tactics was beginning to get to her. "What happened in my case," she said, after the story came out, "was that I ended up being completely ineffectual."

Julie stated her own requiem to her interview article when she said: "The article ended up being a goddamn valentine."

Examiner editor John Todd also went through

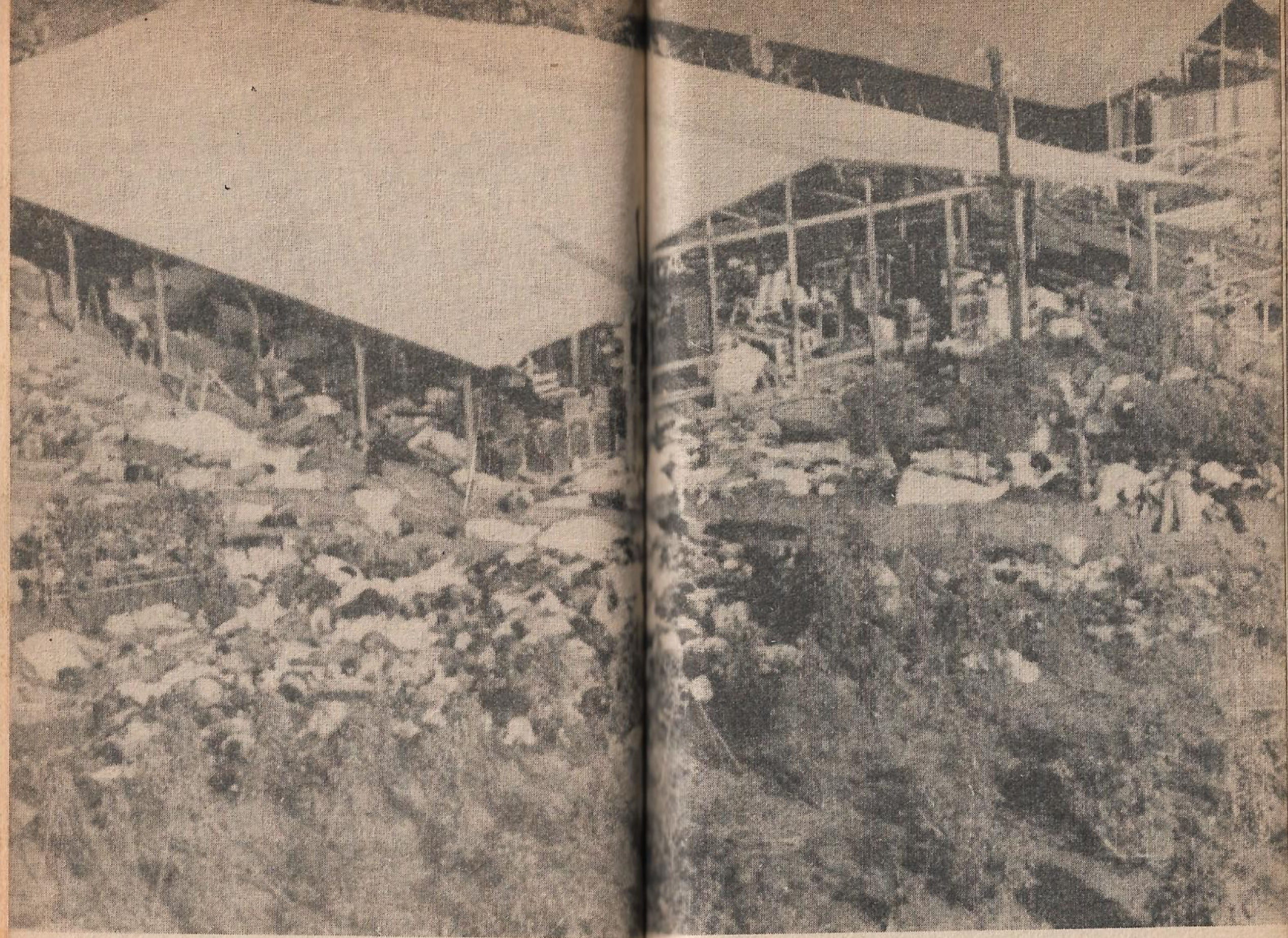
the telephone routine with the group after he and reporter John Burks taped an interview with Jim Jones in 1972 based on the minister's ability to raise the dead. Jones listed forty-three of these major miracles.

The two newsmen wrapped it up, slated it for Sunday, and went home for the weekend. Todd spent the next seventy-two hours answering telephone calls from people demanding that he kill the story. The phone rang constantly, each time a different person, until he was forced to move his family out of the house. "It was a frightening experience," Barnes quotes him as saying.

The *New West* article was not a "goddamned valentine."

The attempt by cult members and Jones to control the press was as ineffectual as they should have known it would be. The late summer of 1977 was a trickle of print that became a flood a year later. Marshall Kilduff, with admirable persistence in searching for a publisher for his story, succeeded in throwing out the ball which was picked up by Tim Reiterman and his colleagues on the staff of both the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner*.

The reign of King Jones was coming to a close. More and more ex-members of the cult were ready to talk to reporters about what went on inside the temple and Jones found himself drowning in the beginning of a sea of printers ink and damning prose.



The mass suicide. Bodies of members of the Peoples Temple are strewn around an open-sided assembly area at Jonestown. Some of the bodies are covered by sheets placed over them by Guyanese troops. Over 900 persons died in this bizarre mass death. UPI

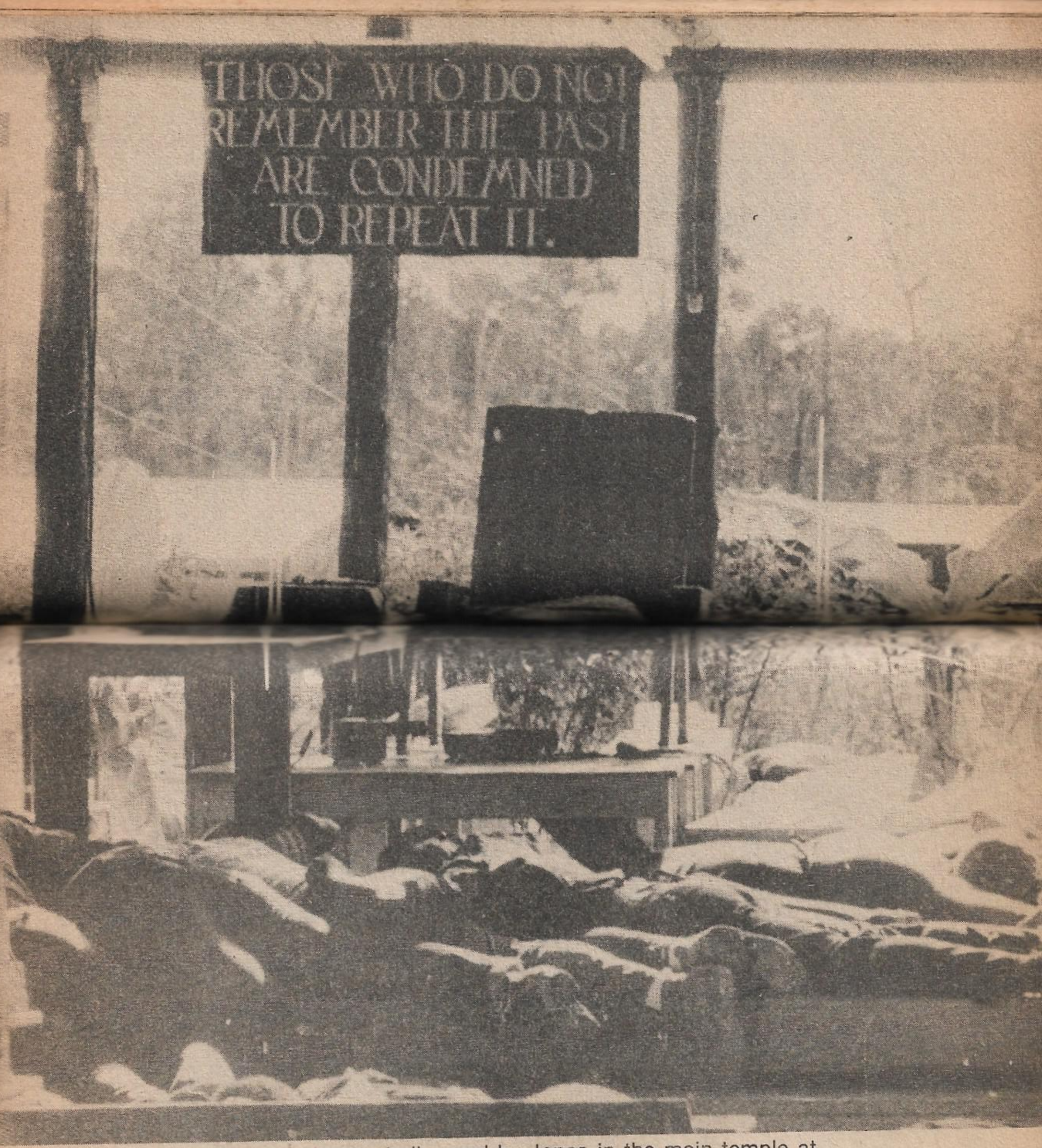
Another aerial view of the carnage. UPI

In a surrounding field, the dead lie, their bodies decomposing in the tropical sun. UPI

The stench of death. Wearing a gas mask, a member of the investigative team sent by the government of Guyana surveys some of the hundreds of bodies found at Jonestown. UPI

Many of the dead were clutching each other as they died. UPI

These two followers of Jones died in each other's arms during the mass suicide. UPI



Bodies lie beneath the seat reportedly used by Jones in the main temple at Jonestown. UPI

A dog wanders past bodies strewn around the auditorium in Jonestown. Note the vats on the table (right) and the large steel vat (left). Both contained the soft drink laced with cyanide that killed most of the members of the cult. UPI

In the foreground, one of the poison-filled vats. UPI

The paraphernalia of mass suicide. Guyanese officials gathered this pile of hypodermic syringes and paper cups of cyanide-laced soft drinks. Officials said the syringes were used to spray the poisonous fluid down the throats of children and animals, while adults drank the cups of poison. UPI

An officer of the Guyana defense force examines some of the weapons found in the Peoples Temple at Jonestown. UPI

Jim Jones, leader of the Peoples Temple cult, lies shot to death on the floor of the Temple's meeting hall in Jonestown. He died of a bullet wound in the head. Authorities said that five persons including Jones died of gunshot wounds, but most died of poisoning. UPI

"I curse the day I was born."

Rev. Jim Jones, Nov. 1978

CHAPTER SIX

A good deal of the Jones empire was on the skids by the time the new year rolled around. The Redwood Valley temple was all but vacated and the cause was continually losing members. The press was beginning to zero in on him and worse, there were rumblings of investigations into his activities which would cap the entire fiasco.

As an ironic aside, the previous May 30, Jim Jones had delivered a speech about the more than 600 people who had plunged to their deaths from the Golden Gate bridge in an effort to have a suicide barrier installed. This year, it was Jones who was sinking into the mental mire of the same paranoia that had sent so many others leaping into the bay.

The Los Angeles Temple was dissolved and members were few. Angered at Jones for denouncing God, and urging them to turn over their property to the temple, most of the Los Angeles segment decided to leave. The future, most assuredly, had a murky outlook for Jones.

Guyana seemed to offer the most hope, the colony of Jonestown into which he had been shipping the faithful and the children for some time. These were the people Jones had been working with constantly and who, it later appeared, were the most susceptible to his brain-washing. During this and previous years, however, more and more of the northern California members were dropping out and they were beginning to ask questions about relatives in Jonestown. They became concerned by letters from Guyana which did not sound as though they had been written by their relatives and bore evidence of Temple censorship.

Prior to Jones' final trip to the settlement, the San Francisco branch of the U.S. passport service became suspicious of the cult. According to a government source, curiousity arose when a temple member, who was a notary public, vouched for a great number of people to obtain passports. A plea for an investigation of the ongoing problem was turned down by federal law enforcement agencies on the basis that there was no evidence of a violation of a federal law.

It is, of course, hindsight to point out that a

possible investigation just *might* have uncovered enough information to justify further searching into the group.

An example of this "grounds of investigation" was pointed out in a story from the *Los Angeles Times*, via the *Associated Press*. The report mentioned a Tennessee ham radio operator named Ed Westcott, of Oak Ridge, who listened and talked to members of the Jonestown settlement for over a year. Westcott stated that the Guyana group was using coded messages (which is illegal) and were operating outside the amateur bands, a violation of international treaties. He added that they operated unidentified for long periods of time.

Jack Tollman, of the Hypnotherapy Center at Santa Rosa, recorded conversations with the ham radio station WB6MID at Jonestown, usually on the 10 and 20 meter band. "Al", the code name for Jim Jones, was interested in Tollman's hypnosis and the two talked for a considerable time about the subject. Tollman, a professional hypnotist, said that the group, who seemed to be missionaries, had invited him down to teach them hypnosis. Fortunately, he could never get free of his work and sent them literature instead.

Tollman stated that the last time he spoke to the group, which included two people named Ron and Sarah, was prior to July. He said they spoke often about reprimanding someone in the organization, sometimes using the word, "severely." Tollman

added that he got the impression that something was going on. He said they seemed upset.

The Temple, he reported, received medical supplies from many parts of the world, including Australia.

It seems reasonable to ask just where the FCC monitoring systems were at this time and why government officials did not attempt an investigation of the ham sets that were being used in this obvious violation. This sort of investigation could hardly be construed as an attack upon the group's civil liberties.

As far as any investigations of the Peoples Temple was concerned, Mayor Moscone refused to launch an official query because, as he stated, there was no evidence of violation of law. District Attorney Joseph Freitas did attempt to start an investigation into some of the Temple's dealings but ran into a stone wall which bogged down his inquiry.

Another problem that had to be bothering Jim Jones in the late summer of 1977 was a second *New West* article by Phil Tracy concerning a brace of suicides that happened to people connected with the Temple one of whom, John Head, was not even a member.

According to Tracy's article John William Head, 22, was reported to have killed himself on October 19, 1975 and was buried in Ukiah. He was said to have leaped from a three story warehouse on North Vignes Street in Los Angeles, according to a copy of

the coroner's report. Oddly enough, on another page of the report it states that he jumped from a bridge and adds that the body bore no scars or surgical wounds.

The strange part of this episode, apart from the confusion over where he died, was the scar report. The boy's mother pointed out that he had 300 stitches in his right leg as the result of a motorcycle accident which had netted him a $10,000 settlement. This money he traded for silver and placed it in a Ukiah bank.

According to John's mother, Ruth Head, on September 27, 1975, Harold Cordell and another Temple member visited him at his home. Shortly thereafter John withdrew his silver and turned it over to the Temple, despite the fact that he was not a member. His only connection with the organization was conversations with a friend Tim Stoen, the man who appeared to be the "second in command" to Jim Jones before his defection in Guyana. John told his mother that he was going to live in one of the temple homes in Los Angeles.

Things deteriorated from that point. A neighbor received a phone call from him the night before he died and he sounded upset. He told the neighbor that he was in a corner of the church and that he was broke. No one would bring him home. Mrs. Head, claiming the Los Angeles coroner's department refused to make an investigation in 1976, said: "I'd like to know what happened."

Another incident involved Maxine Harpe, a Ukiah resident and Temple member, who hanged herself after having given the temple a large sum of money. The controversy surrounding her death, like that of Head, has become the subject of inquiries by relatives and interested persons. So far, nothing.

Dr. Carleton Goodlet, an Oakland resident, stated later that Jones was suffering from an incurable disease but he would not name it to the press. Jones himself admitted it to the fact-finding committee, revealing that he was a victim of cancer, along with a string of other maladies. With Jim Jones' background of healing, curing another case of cancer shouldn't have been much of a problem. Perhaps there weren't any chickens in Jonestown.

Still another problem facing Jones was the custody battle over John Victor Stoen, a six year old boy whom the minister claimed was his son. The child was born to Grace and Tim Stoen, who were both active temple members at the time—Tim having been one of the cult's attorneys. Jones said that he was the father, a statement which both Stoens denied.

Grace Stoen left the Temple when her husband and son went to Guyana. Tim later became disenchanted with the Jones operation in the jungle and returned to the United States where he and Grace were awarded joint custody of the boy. Jones refused to give him up. He was fanatically possessive of the youngster and had once asked Stoen to agree

in writing that Jones was the boy's father. In 1972 Stoen did sign a paper to that effect.

Jones refused to comply with an order from the Superior Court of California which awarded the custody of John to the Stoens. With such problems facing him, Jones left for his 27,000 acre commune in Guyana in June of 1977.

Jones resigned his position as chairman of the San Francisco Housing Authority on August 4, 1977, just three days after the first of *New West's* articles was released. He never returned to the United States and his resignation was issued via the temple's ham radio system.

It was after the article came out that District Attorney Joseph Freitas ordered a review of the Temple. In an *Examiner* story by Don Canter and Tim Reiterman, Freitas was quoted as saying:

"I saw the story and while my analysis of the story was that allegations of possible criminal activity occurred all in Mendocino County, I felt since there is a large Peoples Temple congregation in San Francisco Bob Graham should...determine if there's any need for a criminal investigation."

Robert Graham is the Chief of Special Prosecution.

With the press slowly prying the lid off Jones' "Pandora's Box," the minister wisely decided to stay put in the jungle, keeping in touch with his San Francisco flock by the radio system.

Paradise In The Jungle

CHAPTER SEVEN

During the early 1960's, when missionary Jim Jones stopped there briefly, the country was known as British Guiana; but despite a different name today, it is still a country of heavy jungle, tremendous heat and a kind of humid stickiness that can often act like an oppressive weight.

Guyana is a country of 850,000 people, most of whom live in a narrow belt along the seacoast near the capitol of Georgetown. Given their independence in 1966, the country is led by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham who runs the socialist government backed by his People's National Congress Party.

Around half the population is of East Indian stock, a third are blacks and the rest Indian. A fairly large country, about the size of Idaho, it is basically

an agricultural nation with a large production of bauxite. Farmers raise sugar, rice, citrus crops, cocoa and coffee.

It is a rather poor country with a great deal of undeveloped resources because of the nearly impenetrable jungles. There are few towns, except along the coast, and very little in the way of roads.

Last year, in August, the Guyanese government was told that the Carter administration was expected to increase the country's aid to $12.3 million dollars through the year 1980.

Jim Jones' commune site, near Port Kaituma, is about as isolated as the rest of the villages in the country, and until recently relied upon the river for transportation. The area, however, was perfect for Jones' purposes of maintaining control over his flock. Jonestown, he foresaw, would be next to impossible to walk away from because of the thickness of the jungle. There were swamps, jaguars and snakes in the surrounding area which would terrify many of the city people Jones took down. The wild animals, for the most part, wouldn't be much of a threat, nor would some of the snakes. The greatest problem in trying to flee Jones' dictatorship would be the nearly impenetrable jungle. People without experience in the ways of a rain forest would become hopelessly lost in a short time and in all probability die of exposure.

The Jonestown settlers lived in cottages 20 feet by

20 feet, and, according to Edith Parks, as many as fourteen people shared a single cottage. The majority of them worked the fields of the community, and were faced with severe punishments for infractions. These consisted of beatings, being placed in hot boxes or in a pit at the edge of the jungle.

"We were warned not to try to escape," Christopher O'Neill of Ukiah said later. "We were told there were fifty-foot long tigers and other dangerous wild animals in the jungle." He added that he didn't believe that, but it would not be surprising if a number of Jones' San Francisco people did. Some city people have strange ideas of the so-called terrors of the wildernesses.

At Jonestown, Jim Jones continued the practice he had begun in San Francisco—rehearsals for mass poisonings which ended the cult in November. His control over the people became intensified. Although there was always a great deal of money on hand in the town, perhaps a million dollars or more in cash, the people were not well fed. Meat was practically unknown to those in Jonestown, in spite of the fact that they grew hogs.

Jerry Parks said: "They took most of the meat out of the mission and down river to sell it."

"Public service" was another form of punishment; a person would have shackles put on him and be forced to cut a three foot log in half with an axe.

Some cultists were put into a well, or a box that looked like a cage. A woman who feared snakes was tormented with one.

Those who escaped the Jonestown mass murder reported that Jim Jones, in addition to being crazy, had sexual problems. Sex was one of the tools he used to alienate family members. He forced all of the congregation to admit that they were homosexuals. Jones himself was bisexual and had been arrested in Los Angeles in 1973 after having made lewd advances to an undercover police officer.

Maria Katsaris and another girl lived in Jones' house in the settlement, but his wife lived in a separate building. Jones' son, Stephan, concurred with statements accusing his father of sleeping with other women. "My mother had been hurt many times by it. The only reason she carried on living was for me and my brothers and the community. The only reason I can imagine for her taking the cyanide was that she thought we were gone."

Another of Jones' string of mounting problems was his use of drugs which had become heavier and heavier. He was not a well man during his months in Jonestown and dipped heavily into the settlement's drug supply.

Gradually, with insanity and his drug problem eclipsing his life, Jonestown became more of a concentration camp than a missionary settlement. People who tried to get away were caught and

beaten. People who stayed, for whatever reason, were punished and humiliated.

And the news leaked out.

Gradually, relatives of cult members living in San Francisco and the surrounding area, became aware of the horror being perpetrated in the Guyana jungle. Bewildered and angry, they asked for assistance.

Steven Katsaris, the father of Maria, had long lobbied in Washington trying to get help that would enable him to get his daughter and others out of Jonestown.

It wasn't going to be an easy matter, however, Jones himself said that no one was permitted to leave Jonestown and that he intended to keep guards stationed around to make sure that no one got out. He had firearms, probably smuggled into the camp, and told his congregation that if anyone tried to get away they would be shot and their bodies left in the jungle. He told them that if anyone asked about them he would say he didn't know.

Temple attorney, Charles Garry of San Francisco, was one of the first to answer relatives of those imprisoned in Jonestown. After a petition was delivered to him by a group called Concerned Parents, listing the fact that personal visits were prohibited by Jones along with telephone calls, and mail censoring, he said the accusations were "a lot of bull—" The *Chronicle*, which ran the story on April

12, 1978, obviously used the "dash" instead of "shit". No matter *what* Garry said, the fact remained that no one listened to the group.

Mark Lane, after the November massacre, was brought to task by the Concerned Relatives when they claimed that the killing of babies and children could scarcely be called a suicide, but sheer murder. They added that in view of the fact that Lane admitted to having previous knowledge of the Jones' death plots, some of the responsibility rested on the lawyer.

Lane claimed that the Concerned Relatives knew far more about Jonestown conditions than he did, which might have been true enough. The problem, it seemed to them, was why hadn't they been listened to instead of being discredited.

The great man's answer was unbelievable: "If they weren't crazy, they wouldn't have been discredited."

If the Concerned Relatives were "crazy" as Lane suggested, then they were in good company because they succeeded in getting the action they needed from Congressman Leo J. Ryan, a San Mateo resident. Ryan was a lot of things: bold, decisive and eager to get at the truth of the matter... and, decidedly, *not* crazy.

The crusading Ryan of the 11th Congressional District was a man who not only listened to people and tried to help, but a man who wanted to ferret things out for himself. Not surprising for the son of an Omaha, Nebraska, newspaper reporter. Elected

to Congress in 1972, Ryan had a history of active curiosity since his first public service job in 1955 on the South San Francisco Recreation Commission. A former school teacher, principal and superintendent of schools, Ryan taught school for two weeks in Los Angeles, following the Watts riots in 1966, in an effort to learn about the ghetto. In 1969 he made a study of prison problems, investigating San Francisco City Prison; the following year he spent a week in a cell at Folsom Prison continuing his examination of prison conditions.

Ryan was given the *Man of the Year* award by the International Wildlife Foundation for his journey to the harp seal pup killing grounds of Newfoundland. He had been the guest of the Greenpeace Foundation, an organization of which he approved. Ryan was opposed to the killing of the seal pups for their fur.

His concern for people and the problems of society was as boundless as his energy, and he listened to the people who had relatives in the Jonestown settlement. One thing was certain from the beginning, he wouldn't learn answers to his questions in California. There was nothing else to do, but go down to Guyana and find out the facts.

On November 14, he and his party left New York bound for Georgetown, Guyana.

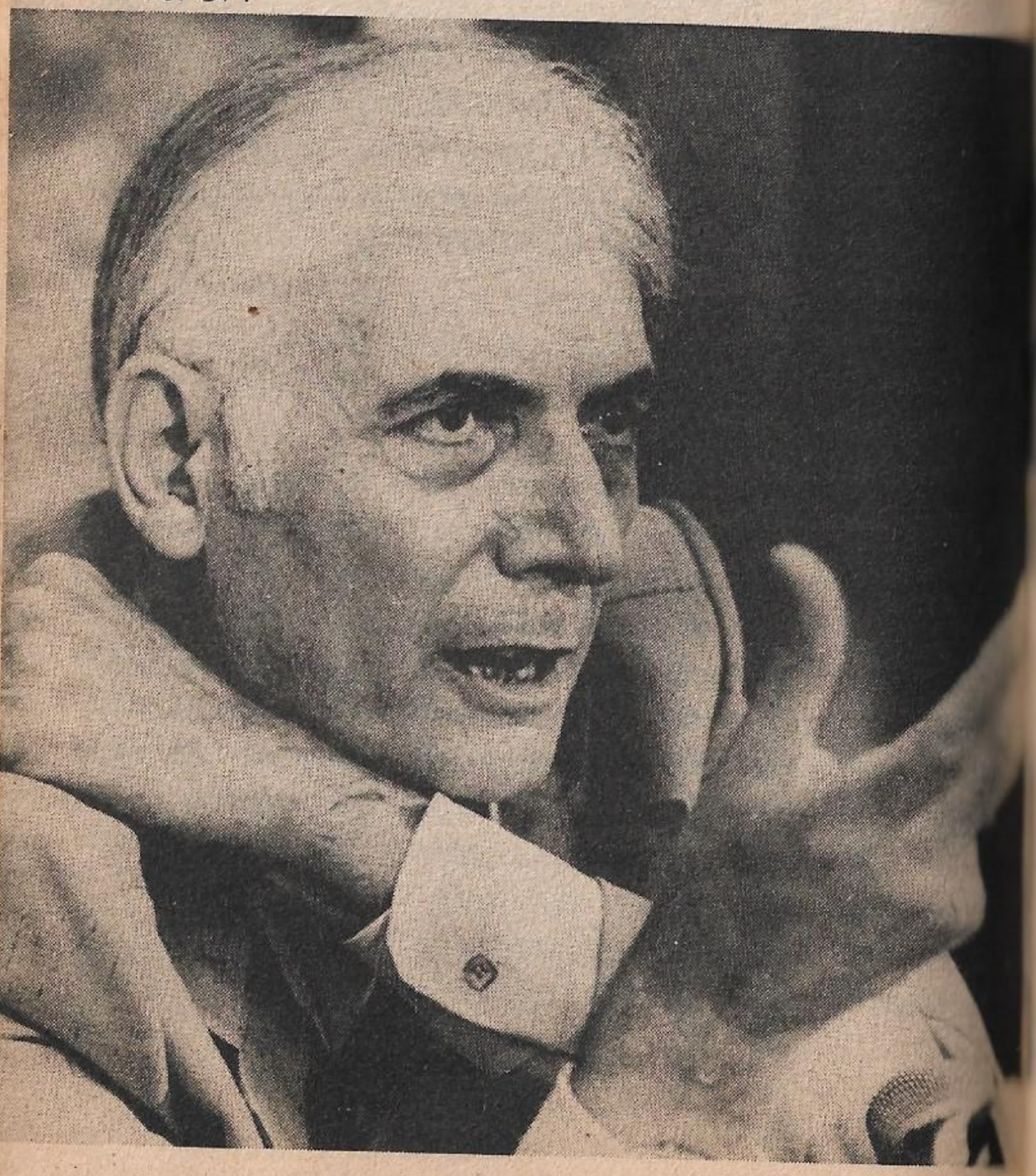
Among those who left for the Jonestown settlement were Congressman Leo J. Ryan, Dem-San Mateo; Jackie Speier, Ryan's legal counsel;

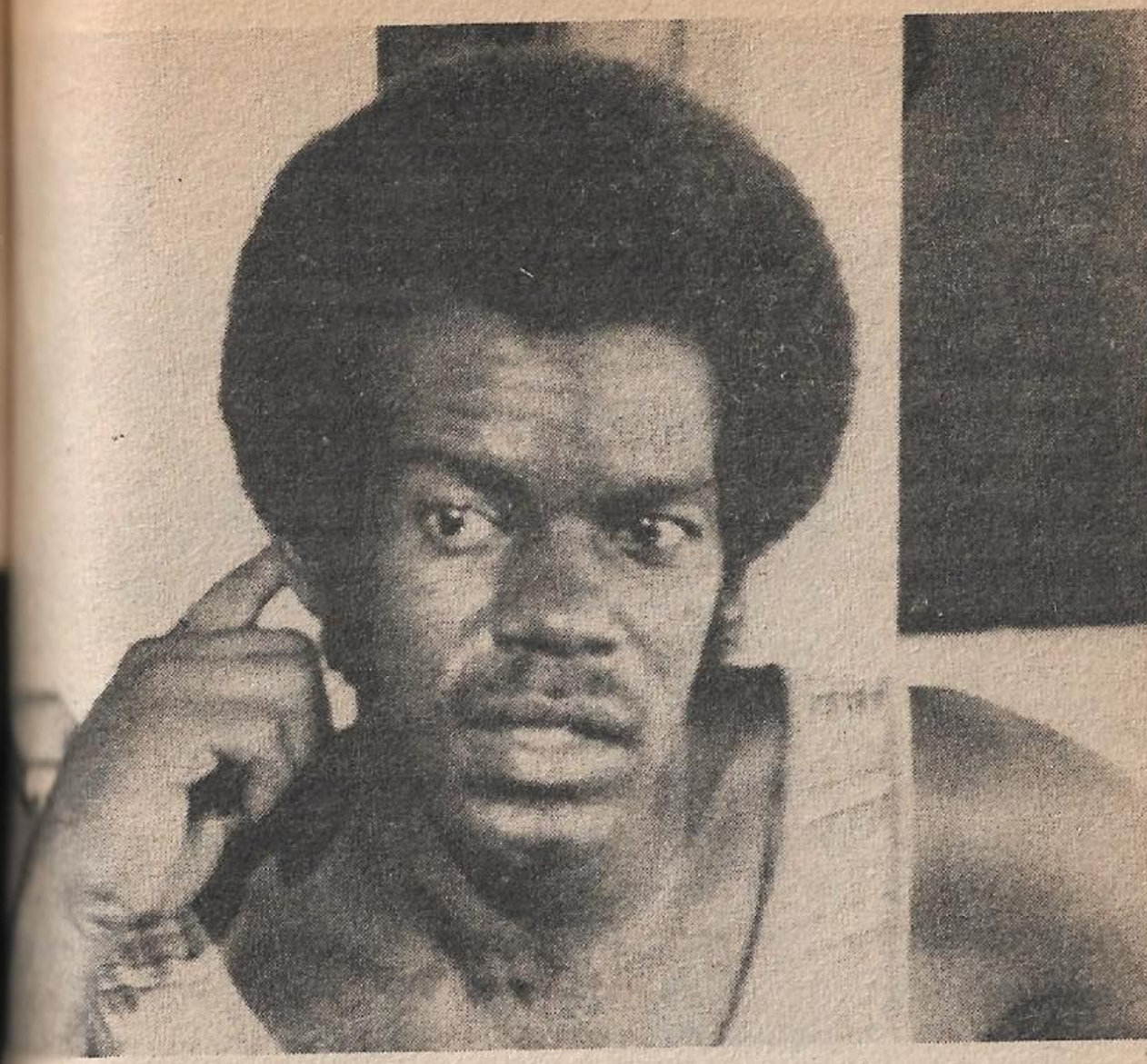
attorneys Charles Garry and Mark Lane; Richard Dwyer, deputy chief of mission, U.S. State Department; Don Harris, Robert Flick, Robert Brown and S. Sung, NBC personnel; reporter Tim Reiterman, San Francisco *Examiner*; photographer Gregory Robinson, San Francisco *Examiner*; Ron Javers, reporter, San Francisco *Chronicle*, and Charles Krause, *Washington Post*.

Among the Concerned Relatives of those at Jonestown were James Cobb, Mrs. Beverly Oliver, Mrs. Kathy Boyd and Anthony Katsaris.

Of these Ryan, Harris, Brown and Robinson would die in the Kaituma airstrip ambush in the most insane weekend in world history.

In San Francisco after the mass suicide which he escaped, Charles Garry, attorney for the Peoples Temple, said that Jones had "lost his reason" when he ordered mass suicides in Jonestown. Garry, who was not at the airstrip ambush of Rep. Ryan's party, was a witness at the Jonestown commune to the start of the mass suicide that eventually claimed over 900 lives. UPI





Another eyewitness of the mass suicide, Odell Rhodes, 33, of Detroit, escaped shortly after the suicide rites began. UPI

In San Francisco, Grace Stoen, who returned from Guyana shortly after the mass suicide, tells reporters how she once practiced suicide rituals with Jim Jones, and how it turned out to be an omen of events in Guyana. Mrs. Stoen gave birth to a child by Jones that became the subject of a custody suit between Jones and her husband Tim, a San Francisco attorney. The child John, 6, was in the death camp in Guyana. UPI

"Please Help Us Get Out of Jonestown"

CHAPTER EIGHT

When the jet lifted from the New York runway, it is certain that the dangers of the journey to Jonestown were on the minds of the congressman's party as well as the members of the news media. Perhaps the danger was equally focused among the Concerned Relatives that accompanied the party; after all, they had been involved before.

Jacqueline Speier, Leo Ryan's legal advisor and aide, knew the problems facing the group in Guyana. She had earlier advised the congressman of the trouble and, when he had insisted on going, she had written her will and left it in her desk.

Joseph Holsinger, Ryan's legislative assistant, had also tried to talk the congressman out of

attempting the trip in view of the reports stating that the "California investigations of the sect's operations 'were not too good'."

Holsinger stated, in an article by John P. Wallach of the *Examiner's* Washington bureau, that the State Department had called Jonestown a "benign situation". Wallach wrote, "There was no reason to believe there was any danger in Jonestown. The Guyana government concurred."

Ryan was warned of the remoteness and isolation of the Jonestown site. Further, the U.S. Embassy, whose officials visited the settlement monthly, was aware of the suicidal tendencies of the group's leaders. Jones also informed officials of the congregation's non-violent attitudes.

In March of 1978 Jones wrote to Congress, protesting bureaucratic harassment and stated that it would be better to die than to be "constantly harrassed from one continent to the next."

Jones, according to Yolanda Crawford, who had been in Jonestown in June of 1977, stated that no one would be permitted to leave the settlement, and that Jones had guns to enforce his rulings.

The U.S. Embassy in Guyana did not think the situation was "benign" and pointed out that Jones had high powered Soviet rifles for his guards and that the U.S. Embassy was not in a position to help. Where Jones obtained these Soviet pieces is not clear at this point, but Guyana forces reportedly are armed with them.

In view of the existence of guards, rifles and protests from members and ex-members, the picture of Jonestown, even to one unschooled in such matters, would seem to indicate that there was more of a deterioration in the cult than had been imagined by the U.S. government.

Eric Hoffer, in the *True Believer*, points out: "Emigration offers some of the things the frustrated hope to find when they join a mass movement, namely, change and a chance for a new beginning... Thus migration can serve as a substitute for mass movement."

Again, Hoffer: "Every mass movement is in a sense a migration—a movement toward *a promised land*; and, when feasible and expedient, an actual migration takes place." (Italics, mine)

However, even though a leader has brought his group of followers up the long road from dissatisfaction to the frontiers of new hope, he would have to make certain that something equally as strong as the drive to *reach* "Utopia" remained to spur the people onward.

Unfortunately, Jim Jones only could grasp a small part of the picture of the elements which create a movement of people to a distant place for a new beginning. Under the guise of religious leader, Jones was probably little more than a shabby Biblical huckster, who had no more faith in God than he had in his people. Despite the fact that he was a tremendous speaker and doer, his emptiness of

purpose (other than a greed for money) lacked the substance to sustain his people.

In Jonestown, the "promised land", there was nothing for Jones to accomplish since his drive had been directed totally to the acquisition of money. He became an exile, due to the way Stateside people had begun to dig into his nefarious actions. As an exile he controlled only the comparative few who remained faithful—now poor as mice because of Jones' systematic plundering of their property and cash holdings.

There was no goal now, nor was there anything to sustain him as leader. He had long abandoned God, just as he had abandoned the socialist dogma he espoused. He had reached the point where he would fly into a rage at a little child stepping on a bug... where the only way (he believed) that he could handle his group was by severe punishment and outlandish actions. His paranoia had grown worse, feeding upon itself like a cancer as it usually does, and his health had begun to seriously hamper him.

The path to Utopia is often easier than creating something out of it when you arrive. Jones did not have the ability to cope with it, nor did a lot of his followers. He was not a John Smith, or a Brigham Young. In short, he had become desperate and desperate men do not think rationally—if at all.

Into this mental inflammation, this sociological abscess, Leo Ryan and his party entered.

At the Hotel Pegasus in Georgetown Ryan and his aide, Jackie Speier, began the process of trying to get into Jonestown. In view of all the warnings and information Ryan had from his governmental briefings as well as the reports from the Concerned Relatives he must have been apprehensive about visiting Temple members in Guyana. The State Department was not happy with Ryan's organization of the fact-finding party. A letter from Mark Lane had stated that going to the jungle outpost would be impossible at the time.

Ryan, naturally, continued to force the situation, as he had with Greenpeace in Newfoundland, and capped it when he visited the temple's Georgetown headquarters uninvited. He greeted the Jonestown people with, "Hi, I'm Leo Ryan, the bad guy. Does anyone want to talk?"

At the settlement, Jim Jones was feeling the pressure of the party from the states. Swallowing pills and taking drugs, undoubtedly supplied by the temple's pseudo-physician Lawrence Schacht, Jones began arranging the Jonestown stage for the arrival of the fact-finding party. To deny the forceful congressman access to the compound would only reinforce the belief that the settlement was indeed a prison.

Instrumental in the negotiations with Jim Jones, were attorneys Charles Garry and Mark Lane who wanted Jones to show off Jones' jungle paradise. Unfortunately Garry and Lane were barely talking

to each other. Garry was miffed that Lane had been called in from Washington as one of the Temple's legal eagles. "I was pissed," Garry said later, in typical fashion.

At first Ryan intended going alone; then he shifted tactics and wanted the media and relatives to accompany him. Finally it was arranged for the flight to Port Kaituma, a hundred and fifty miles northwest. The party included all of the press members and four of the Concerned Relatives, including James Cobb, Mrs. Beverly Oliver, Anthony Katsaris, and Mrs. Kathy Boyd. In addition there was Jeff Dieterich, State Department Press Officer.

Garry and Lane, still at loggerheads, naturally, were along.

When the plane touched down the group was met by half a dozen Temple members whom Tim Reiterman described as being hostile. After a parley, Ryan and his aides were escorted to Jonestown; the others followed several hours later.

Jones had set the stage. A harvest festival, fun and games in paradise, a tour of the tiny village and dinner. There was laughter among the residents as the charade went on. One escaped Temple member told officials that Friday afternoon Jones had "people watching people watching people" to assure success.

They had a dinner of Sloppy Joe sandwiches,

greens and potatoes. Jonestown resident Edith Parks said afterward that they had nothing to eat but rice and gravy during the previous three days. The pork Sloppy Joes, she said, was the first meat she could remember.

"From what I've seen, there are a lot of people here who think this thing that has happened is the best thing that has happened in their whole lives," said Ryan.

The crowd cheered. Jones rose from his throne to join in. "The big cheer was staged," Jerry Parks told reporters later.

The fact-finders went back to Port Kaituma where they intended waiting until Saturday to continue their investigations of the Jonestown community. Before leaving the compound, a young man passed a message to NBC's Don Harris which contained four signatures. "Please help me get out of Jonestown."

The message, it would seem, was the most important fact the group uncovered before returning to spend the night in a tin-roofed beer parlor in Port Kaituma.

Back at the compound, Jim Jones was thinking seriously about a plan to get rid of the congressman's fact finding committee and the press. He would go through with tomorrow's tour of Jonestown, set up a colossal plane accident or some such thing and get back to the business of telling all

his followers how lucky they were to be out of the race wars which were about to break on the United States.

That had been another of his fears. He spread it among his followers.

In cults of this type, no matter how good they may appear on the surface—whether they are religious, social or political—they all seem to contain the same threads of thought permeating their philosophy. The primary difference appears to be the scale on which the cultist operates.

In addition to creating a dependance upon the leader of the group, and destroying the individual through one means or another, the cultist must have a goal—Hitler dreamed of restoring Germany to an empire that would last a thousand years, Mussolini promised to restore the glory that was Rome. Jones saw himself as a Messiah leading his lost souls to the Promised Land.

The groups of today, Charles Manson, Jean Brayton's O.T.O. Solar Lodge, and Jones' Peoples Temple all clung to the idea of a racial bloodbath—which has, thank God, never developed. The worst racial terror of modern times has been Hitler's massacre of six million Jews, a savagery the entire world will have difficulty living down.

Together with building whatever future lies in the minds of the various cultists, there must also be something which will enflame its members. It would seem that today such a theme would be the

black-white bloodbath. The idea is easily pointed up in the racial problems of the United States, coupled with the South African situation and the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya during the fifties.

Jones' idea, no doubt, was to convince his people of how lucky they were to be living and farming in Jonestown, rather than in the States with such wars tearing everything apart. His problem was that his insanity was working in reverse.

Jones' excesses were beginning to take their toll of his leadership. The excessive beating, homosexual accusations, Jones' failure to feed his people properly was beginning to set off a chain reaction. People who had been fearful of speaking out were now openly rebelling against Jones' domination of their lives. Yet there were limits to the revolt—restrictions placed upon them by the peculiar geographic location of Jonestown. They were isolated. There was the censorship of mail. Communication with friends at home was virtually impossible. The feeling that it would never be possible for them to leave was reinforced by Jones' guards and the firearms they carried. The citizens of Jonestown had begun to realize how tragically they had been duped. But their awareness had come too late for them to do anything about it.

Into this growing powder keg situation, Ryan led his committee Saturday morning. Jones, it appeared, had lost his grip entirely, both on the people and on himself, and was unable to sustain the

masquerade. More and more residents asked the crew to help them get away; the number had reached twenty by the end of the day.

Jim Jones was drugged and confused when he was interviewed by the press, his answers vague or contradictory, and he insisted, as usual, that there was a conspiracy against him.

Jones denied the existence of guns, then changed his mind to admit there were hunting weapons; finally he said there were guns, but he didn't know how many. When asked about beatings, he stated they hadn't had any in more than a year.

"I have been beaten, too," he said. Ron Javers of the *Chronicle*, who conducted the interview, felt that . . . "He was asking us to understand how much he suffered when somebody else was enduring physical pain."

With all due respect to Javers and his story, in viewing Jones' background it would be more to the point to believe that he was feeling the crush of failure coming down around his ears. His interview was so incoherent and disjointed that it seemed the reflection of a man who truly *was* beaten.

We must not forget that this was the man who had laughed when other Temple members were being beaten by his peculiar custom of punishment—long before he went to Guyana. It is quite possible that with the magnification of his insane paranoia and inability to accept a situation that he could not control, Jim Jones had, over the past months,

allowed his sadistic streak to completely dominate his character.

While the children watched video tapes in the pavilion, the congressman's group was taken on a tour of the town by guides who pointed out the advances made by the Temple group. There had been 33 babies born without a death in the Jonestown hospital, the sawmill was completed and they had a library with 10,000 volumes. In addition, there was a shop for making furniture and the group made its own peanut butter from their own peanuts. The basketball team was considered one of the best and was now at a tournament in Georgetown.

One of the buildings appeared closed. After the group pressed for entry, the town's attorneys granted it. It was a dormitory structure. "You know the problem?" Lane asked. "It's crowded. That's to be expected; we went from 80 to 1200 persons in a year."

A bed count, made after the massacre, revealed that there were only 600 beds in the settlement and that the 1200 figure was not true.

The fact-finding group ate grilled cheese sandwiches for lunch. Mark Lane, who later admitted that he knew the sandwiches contained drugs, ate cough drops. "I brought along some cough drops, which have a lot of sugar in them. I sure as hell wasn't going to eat the cheese sandwiches."

The meeting began to draw to a close with

members of the press feeling edgy and anxious to leave. About twenty residents begged to go along and Jones agreed to let them, saying that they might be "better off" elsewhere if they didn't want to stay. It was decided to make two trips in view of the number of people the dump truck had to haul; Leo Ryan was to remain behind until the second load of people could be brought out.

There was a cheer from the crowd.

Suddenly a man, identified as Don Sly, leaped at Congressman Ryan with a knife and tried to slit his throat. The attacker was grabbed by Mark Lane and Charles Garry who wrestled the weapon from him. Sly was cut in the melee and splotches of blood stained Ryan's shirt in a macabre example of what was to come.

Shaken, Leo Ryan climbed into the truck with the others. They headed back for the strip at Port Kaituma. Lane and Garry stayed with the dazed Jones at the jungle settlement of Jonestown.

In the truck, rumbling down the muddy road, Larry Layton said that he was happy to get out; but Gerald Parks didn't agree with Layton's statement and tried to warn Ryan and his group.

Jim Wilse, *Examiner* City Editor, quoted Parks later in Georgetown: "We knew he was up to something, but nobody would believe us. We warned Ryan and the others, but they didn't think it was serious."

At the airstrip the group disembarked from the dump truck and watched their Guyana Airways Otter settle in for a landing. A single engine Cessna was parked near the tin shed at the edge of the runway that was used as a waiting area. Four soldiers, at the far end of the runway, guarded a government plane with a collapsed nosewheel.

A red tractor and a flatbed trailer crossed the runway and started toward the group of Americans who stood near the twin engine plane that would take them out. "I think we're in for some trouble," NBC reporter Don Harris said.

The tractor advanced to a spot near the tin hut with Bob Brown's camera grinding at it. Tim Reiterman mentioned to Greg Robinson that it looked like trouble, but both photographers were filming.

Suddenly shots rang out and someone yelled, "Hit the deck!"

Reiterman dropped flat, but a bullet shattered his left forearm and another slammed into his wrist tearing off his watch. He got up and ran for the jungle, forty yards away.

Ron Javers, standing between Bob Brown and Don Harris, was hit in the left shoulder and knocked to the ground. He crawled behind the right wheel of the plane.

Bob Brown continued to film the attack until a bullet dropped him to the runway. One of the

attackers shot him in the head with a shotgun as he lay there. Javers leaped to his feet and raced into the swampy jungle.

Greg Robinson was hit in the shoulder and the chest, and fell near the boarding steps. Congressman Ryan, shot in the head, lay under the DeHavilland DHC-6's right wing. Also near the boarding steps 42-year old Patricia Parks lay dead from a bullet in the head.

Larry Layton fired a pistol at the pilot, but missed. His next shots hit Vernon Gosney and Monica Bagby before he was disarmed by Dale Parks. Parks tried to fire the gun but it had jammed and Layton escaped. After everything was over he came back to the area where he was arrested by the Guyanese authorities.

During the massacre, Jackie Speier was wounded in the right leg and arm; NBC technician Steve Sung had been shot in the right forearm, and Anthony Katsaris was wounded in the chest.

Those who were able, wounded or not, scattered into the surrounding jungle.

In Georgetown, Guyana, a 76-year-old woman who slept through the mass suicide at Jonestown tells her story to reporters. UPI

The youngest survivor. Three-year-old Jakarri Wilson, who escaped with his mother from the mass suicide at Jonestown, strokes her chin as she talks to newsmen in Georgetown. Jakarri's mother said they escaped through the jungle to a railroad track and made their way to safety. UPI

In Georgetown, Tim Carter (left) and his brother Mike (right) tell their story of how they managed to escape from Jonestown while hundreds of others perished in the ritual suicide. Tim said he and his brother were ordered to flee with a suitcase filled with $500,000. UPI

Stephan Jones (center), son of cult leader Jim Jones, talks to reporters in Georgetown. The son, who was in Georgetown during the Jonestown suicide, depicted his father as a fanatic and paranoid. But young Jones said he would continue in his father's work if surviving Temple members were willing to have him continue. UPI

The Jonestown legacy. These Guyanese children sit atop a coffin made for a relative who joined the Peoples Temple sect and died with them at Jonestown. UPI

Murders At The Air Strip

CHAPTER NINE

In Georgetown, the Guyana police department were already investigating the death of Sharon Amos and her three children in the Temple headquarters in the Lamaha Gardens section of the capitol.

The forty-year-old aide to the Reverend Jim Jones had apparently slit her own throat, after she had cut the throats of her children; Liana Harris, 21; Martin Amos, 9; and Christa Amos, 10. It would seem a rather difficult thing for Sharon Amos to slit the throat of a 21-year-old daughter, but that was the original idea of the police.

Back at the Pegasus Hotel, the ex-husband of Sharon Amos, Sherwin Harris held his grief within himself as tightly as he could. "These people are insane," he said bitterly. With him were the ten San

Francisco Bay area relatives who had been forced to stay behind, unable to get on the plane that carried the congressman's fact-finding committee to Jonestown.

As darkness fell over the jungle, they received word of the ambush at the Port Kaituma airport. Stunned by the news, they gathered in a room to wait out the long night while the hotel was placed under heavy guard. The Guyana army launched a platoon of men in trucks to attempt to secure the airport and to find out more of what had happened to the congressman and his crew.

Back at the airport the survivors of the ambush, some of them severely wounded, were taken in by the Guyanese despite the fact that no one knew for certain whether the temple people would come back to attempt a *coup de grace* and kill those that remained, perhaps even those helpful Guyanese who had assisted them.

A tropical storm lashed the night sky and they later felt that it had saved them from further shooting. Each time a truck motor sounded in the night, alarm spread among them. Attack did not come again, but it wasn't the storm that interfered.

It was cyanide.

Charles Garry and Mark Lane, back in Jonestown, were taken away to the East House of the commune. They saw eight men with automatic rifles and ammunition going toward the auditorium where the others were assembling. Two black

members, with guns, told the attorneys, "We are all going to die." They were smiling.

Jim Jones was at the loudspeaker extolling the beauty of dying and the dignity of death. He shouted, "Mother, mother, mother, mother, mother, mother."

Then there was shooting.

Lane and Garry ran into the brush and stumbled off into the jungle. Lane said that he counted 85 shots as he and Garry stumbled through the trees.

Odell Rhodes witnessed much of the mass murders and suicides at Jonestown and succeeded in getting away after about twenty minutes. "A lot of people walked around like they were in a trance."

Jones told his followers that the time had come for the ritual mass death. He said that the defectors would never reach the United States. He asked if anyone objected and one woman suggested moving the settlement to Cuba or the Soviet Union as an alternative.

At that time the gunmen returned from the airstrip and reported what had happened. Rhodes said that Jones told the gathering that it was too late for anything except suicide.

The camp doctor, Larry Schacht, and nurses brought out a tub of grape drink, laced with potassium cyanide, and began to administer it to the children first by shooting syringes of the liquid into their mouths.

Many of the children were crying, and one girl

who didn't want to take it kept spitting it out, but they forced it on her. Jones was sitting calmly telling the people not to tell the children they were dying. "It was hard to believe," Rhodes said. "All my thoughts were on how to get out of there."

Rhodes said that he slipped past the guards and hid under a building until the guards were called to take poison; then he moved around the houses and into the jungle. He later followed the road to Port Kaituma where he informed the authorities.

A 76 year-old woman, crippled with arthritis, slept through the entire tragedy and awoke the next morning unable to comprehend what had happened. She found her sister dead but didn't want to believe it. She said that on Sunday afternoon a settlement nurse found her and brought her some sandwiches from the kitchen. The nurse then ran off into the jungle where she had said others had gone.

She and another old man, who had somehow survived, were taken out of the settlement by police on Tuedsay morning. Jones was found with a bullet in his temple. Maria Katsaris had also been shot and was lying on the bed in Jones' house, together with another woman who was unidentified.

Rhodes' statement that he waited until the guards were called, before making his escape, indicates that they were among the last to take poison—probably stacking their weapons as they did so. After the guards had died, it would appear that the only ones left were Jones and the nurses, along with Schacht. It

was also stated that the gun that killed Jones was found some distance from his body—and, on Sunday afternoon a nurse fed sandwiches to Hyacinth Thrash, the old woman.

Who shot Jones?

It seems highly unlikely that a man could shoot himself in the temple, then take the trouble to move the gun some distance away before dropping. Could it be that Doctor Schacht did it? If the nurse got away, and said there were others in the bush, was she speaking of the medical staff and maybe a few of the guards?

Then there were Tim Carter and Michael Prokes who also got away from the Jonestown disaster. According to Prokes, Maria Katsaris found them when trouble began, gave them a suitcase containing $560,000 and two pistols. "She came up and said things were out of control, to take this, and we left," Prokes said. "We had to get rid of the money because it was too heavy—we were running for our lives."

They opened the suitcase about a mile from Jonestown at a "chicken house" where they left it. Inside there were bundles of money and a letter to an official of the Soviet Embassy in Georgetown. Maria had given them the pistols with orders to kill themselves if they were stopped on their mission.

Prokes was high in the Jones echelon, acting as a kind of official spokesman for the church.

Had Maria given them the money and weapons because she felt Prokes could be trusted to complete

the mission, and she and the minister would make their way to the Russian Embassy later? If so, why was she shot, and by whom? The situation leaves a lot of questions open for discussion as to the last hours of Jonestown. Questions that may never be answered satisfactorily in view of the carnage that wiped out everyone.

Perhaps it isn't fair to guess at something of this magnitude, but the question of the loose ends must surely go along with the most important question.

"Why?"

Tim Carter said: "I'm terrified of returning to the United States. I am sure there are relatives out for the blood of anyone connected with the Peoples Temple."

Charles Beikman, a 20-year member of the Temple, was arrested and charged with the attempted murder of 12-year-old Stephanie Jones who, police said, had witnessed the deaths of Sharon Amos and her children.

Police stated that Beikman was responsible for those deaths as well, and added that it appeared that Beikman acted on the invitation of Sharon Amos, who was not strong enough to do it herself.

Larry Layton has been charged with the deaths of Leo Ryan and the other four at the airstrip ambush, and police say that the other gunmen were probably among the dead at Jonestown.

Suicide Drill Becomes a Nightmare

CHAPTER TEN

The man who usually extolled the virtues of Jonestown, and accused the world in general of abusing the temple and its leaders, disclosed amazing information to the press following the murder-suicide of the more than 900 members of the cult.

Mark Lane, the Washington attorney recently hired by Jones, stated that he knew that strong depressants and tranquilizers were used to keep people at Jonestown against their will. He also had knowledge of the practice suicide drills—in addition to the drugged cheese sandwiches.

Lane said he had warned Congressman Ryan that Jones was sick and that the visit could have "explosive consequences". He stated after the event

that he not only knew that Jones was serious about the mass suicide plan, but that he was aware that a hit squad was to kill enemies of the temple following the ritual deaths.

The second phase of Jim Jones' plot was to be a short wave broadcast of the words, "White Night", which would set in motion suicides and killings in the United States, generally in California. This message had been broadcast but the Guyana signal was not strong enough to override a ham radio "field day" throughout the United States on the day of the death ritual.

Lane's knowledge of the reality of Jonestown and his silence until after more than 900 people died has angered relatives of those members confined to Jonestown. Lane, in an attempt to justify himself, said that he believes that exposing the real situation would have done little good. He said it might have caused the mass suicide-murder earlier than it did.

Mark Lane's position on the matter of Jonestown and its tragedy is a difficult one to understand, under the circumstances.

"What could have been done?" Lane asked. "I believe that if the Marines had been called in, ninety percent of the people at Jonestown would have fought to their deaths."

That's highly doubtful, particularly people who had been kept drugged so they couldn't leave; but then Mr. Lane possibly assumes too much in his belief that the Marines would have stormed the place

as though it were Iwo Jima. There were a great many other alternatives that the United States could have used to prevent such a thing, and his assumption that nothing could have been done places him in the position of a man who knew that over 900 people would die, and refused to act. Perhaps it would have been well had he talked sooner and spared the lives of Leo Ryan, Patricia Parks and the members of the news media, rather than include them in the insane Jones' plot that he apparently knew was about to errupt in the jungle compound.

His attitude in defending Jones and discrediting the Concerned Relatives when they tried to point out the problems at Jonestown is equally puzzling. "If they weren't crazy," he said of them, "they wouldn't have been discredited."

It seems difficult to find *any* kind of insanity in the concern of relatives attempting to free misled members from a concentration camp *supposedly* constructed in the name of religious freedom.

Charles Garry, Lane said, knew about the pact, but the older attorney denied the charge. Garry claimed that he felt that he could have prevented the tragedy had Lane told him about Jones' mental state *before* they had spent the night in the jungle after leaving Jonestown.

"I think I could have been able to prevent the holocaust," Garry said.

Lane countered by saying that, "At the age of seventy, Charles is too old to act like a virgin."

Jones' condition, however, was completely discernable to the news media from the first. W. E. Barnes, columnist for the *Examiner*, said: "Jim Jones was a catastrophe waiting to happen. That became clear to me more than a year ago, after my first nerve-fraying brush with the man and his flock."

"Jones had struck us as a madman," Ron Javers wrote after the ambush.

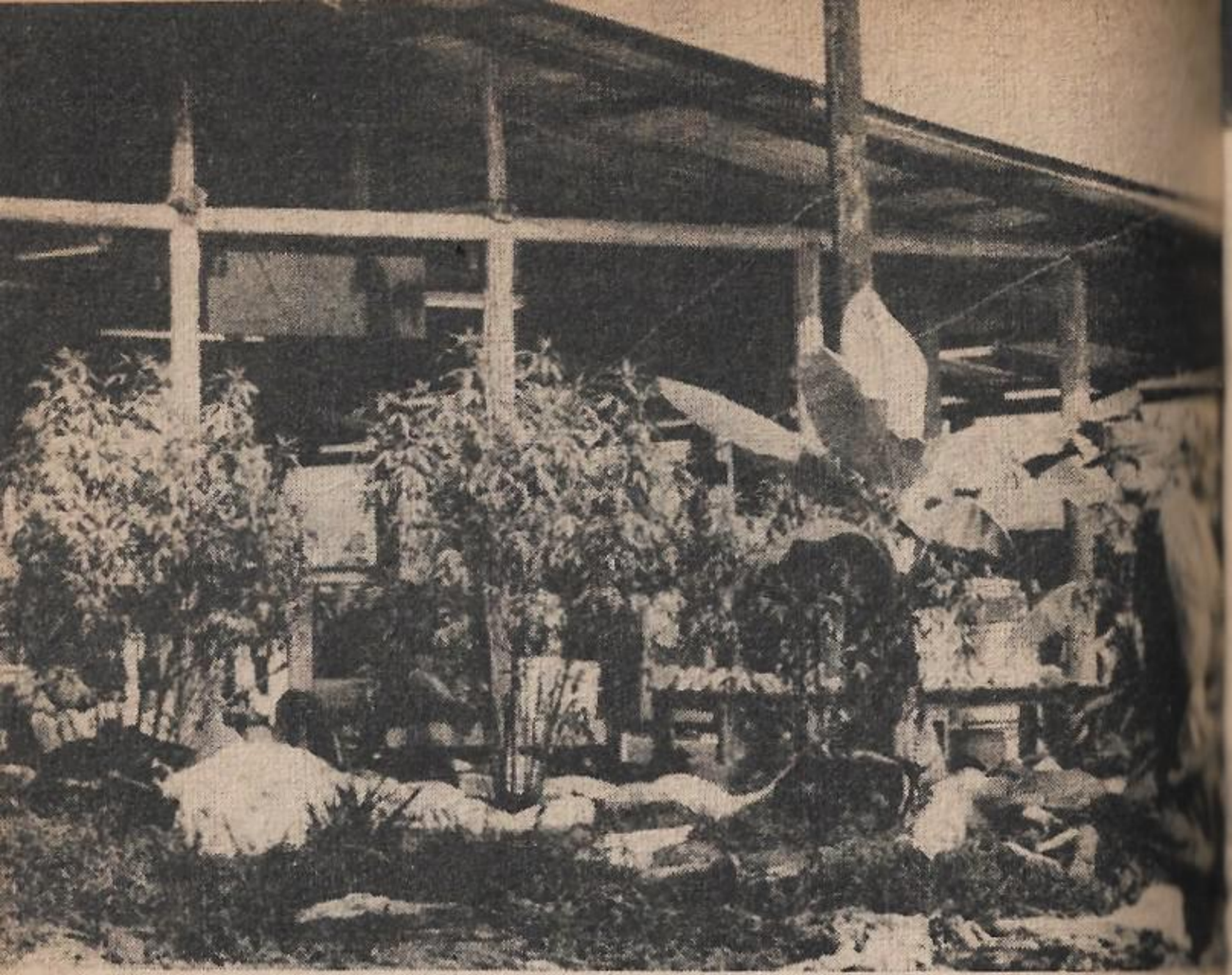
A scanning of Tim Reiterman's earlier stories in the *Chronicle*, along with his fellow reporters, the reports of ex-Temple members, or a glance at *New West's* brace of articles—coupled with the fortress-like Peoples Temple in San Francisco—ought to convince anyone that Jim Jones was not what he pretended to be. Garry and Lane had spent considerable time with Jones; something most reporters had not been able to do.

Former temple members signed affidavits attesting to the fact that Jones made frequent remarks about death, and that he would rather have his people dead than to live in the United States. The evidence of the newsprint would have been obvious to all but the most dyed-in-the-wool Temple member.

Virgins? Perhaps there are *two*, and *both* decidedly too old.

Planning the evacuation of the bodies. In Georgetown, U.S. Major Richard Helmling (center), director of the joint task force evacuating bodies from the Jonestown mass suicide, talks to reporters. UPI

The dreadful task begins. American military personnel unload bags containing bodies from a wagon as another helicopter arrives at Jonestown. UPI



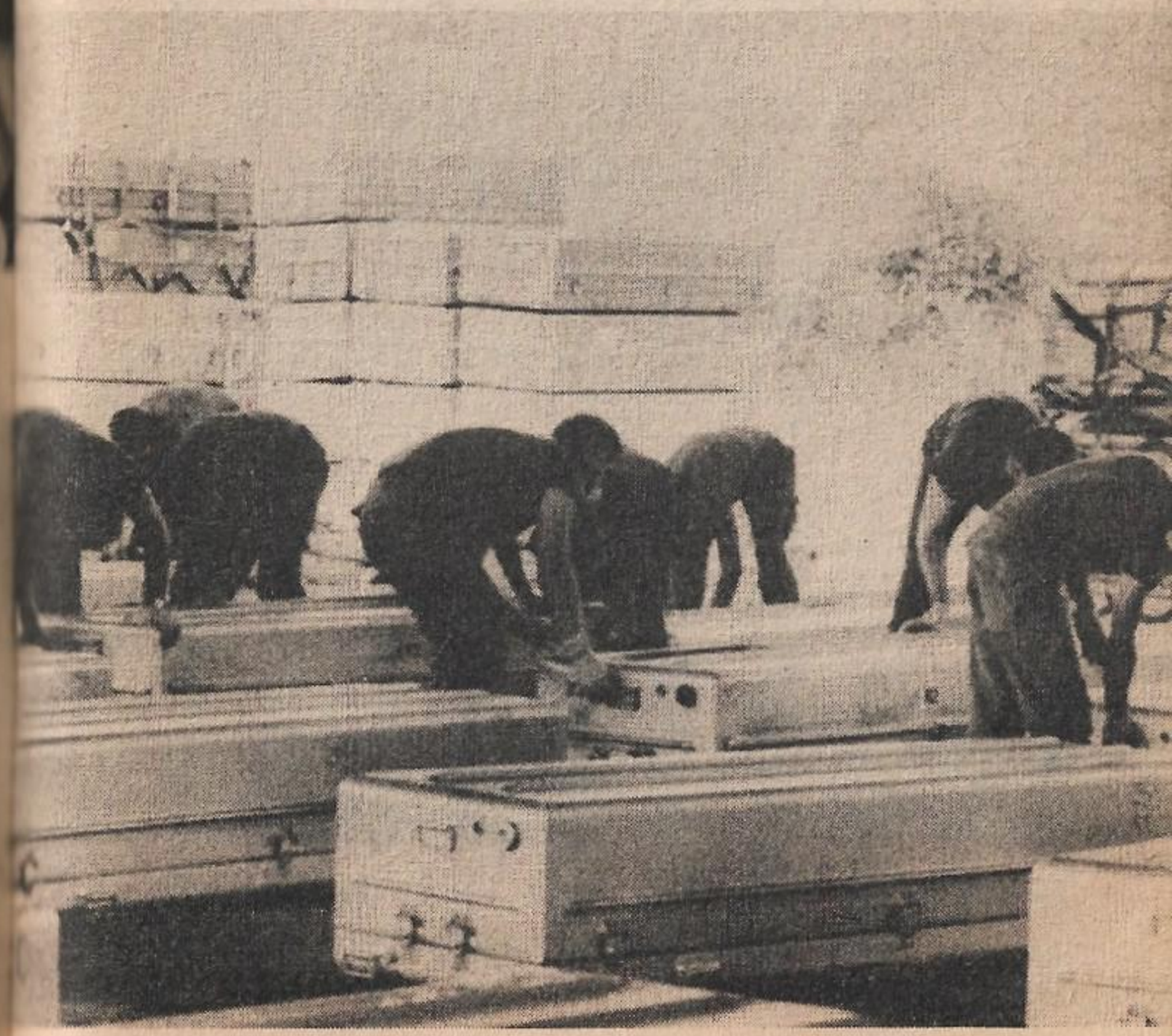
An American military member of the body recovery team walks past some of the victims. UPI

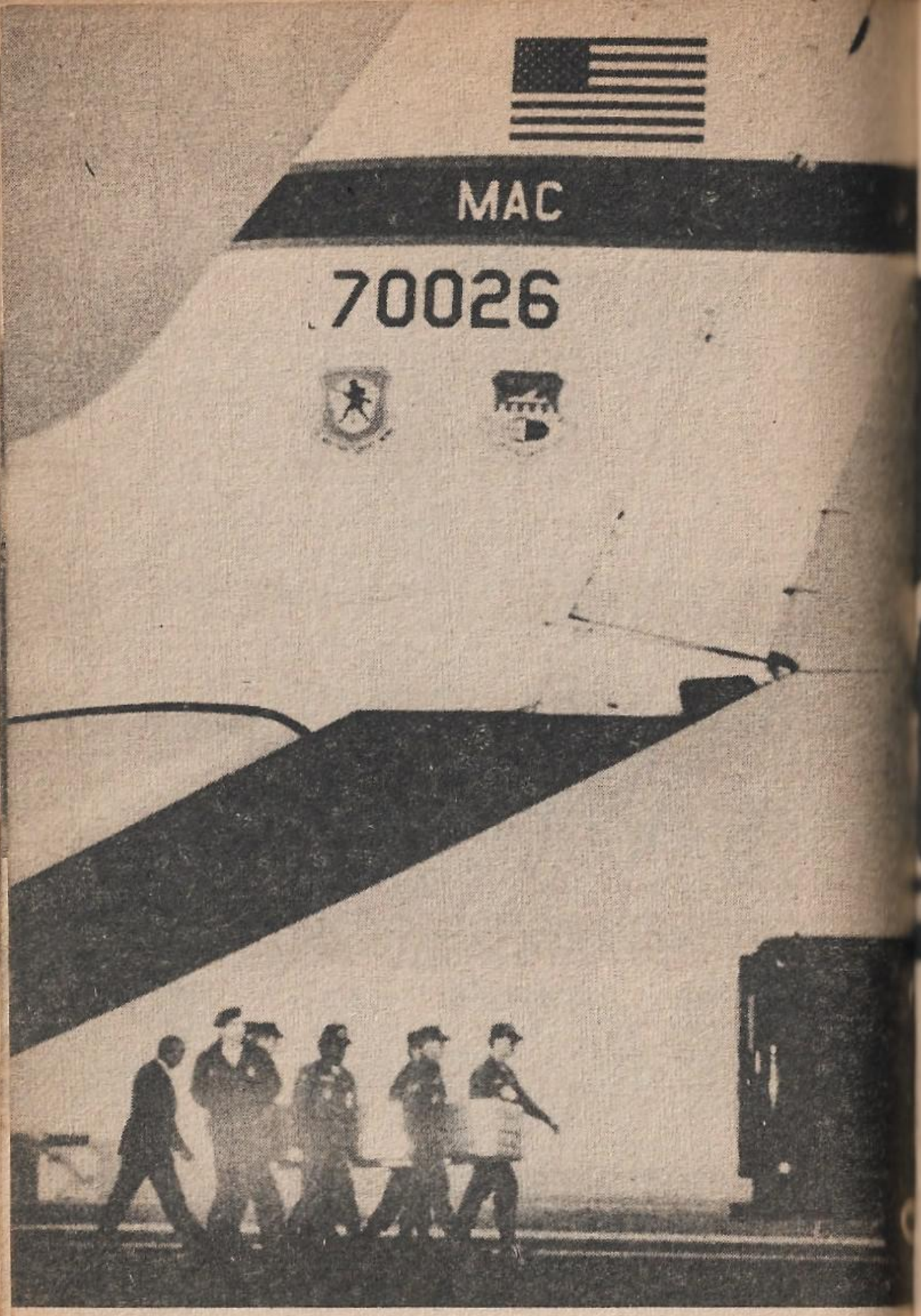
Life amidst death. Hanging plants (top center) are the only things still alive inside the Peoples Temple auditorium. UPI

U.S. military personnel struggle with two body bags which arrived in Georgetown. UPI

At Georgetown airport, bodies of the Jonestown dead are placed in aluminum caskets for the trip home. UPI

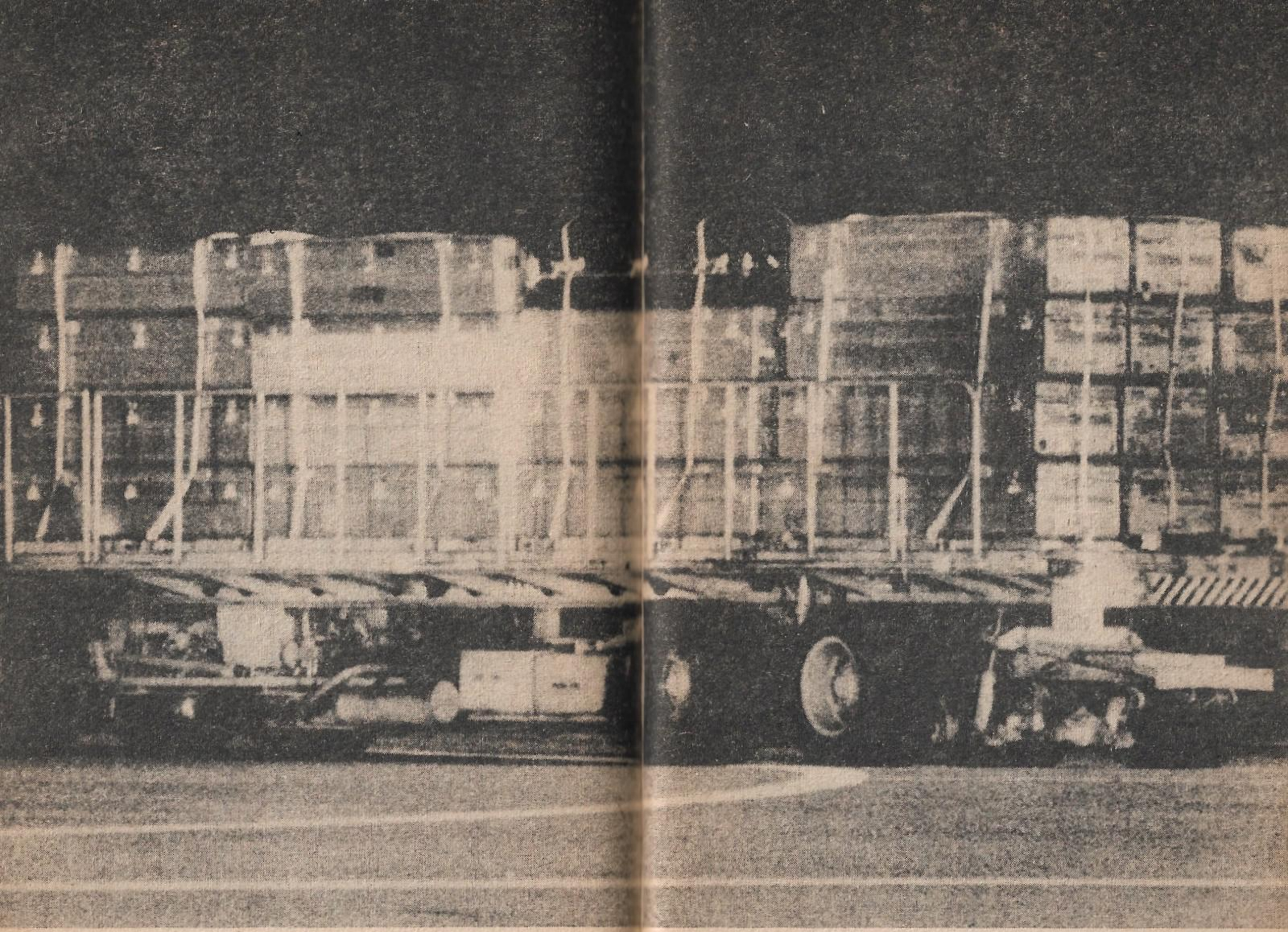
Aluminum caskets are processed and stacked for shipment by a military graves identification unit. Around the men are stacks of more than half the victims' coffins. UPI





Arrival in the U.S. One of the first victims of the Guyana mass suicide is carried to a waiting van at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. UPI

A close-up of the grim procession at Dover AFB. UPI



Death's cargo. At Dover AFB, a truck pulls away, carrying the final load of coffins brought from Guyana. UPI

At Jonestown—exhaustion. The arduous task of removing over 900 bodies from the steamy jungle took its toll on a member of the body recovery team. UPI

Relief. U.S. military personnel display their enthusiasm that the task is over. UPI

Grim epitaph. A body recovery worker in Georgetown cinches up a stack of coffins, one of which contains the body of "Rev. Jimmie Jones." UPI

"Shoot Me," The Woman Cried

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"When not backed by force, propaganda can persuade people only of what they want to believe, and it can make headway only when it gives people something they desperately desire."—*Ordeal Of Change*—Eric Hoffer

At the San Francisco branch of the Peoples Temple the word of the massacre at the airport and the mass death at Jonestown dropped with the heaviness of the gray clouds that swept the bay. A thin drizzle of cold rain seeped sporadically from a brooding sky.

There were guards along the hurricane fence at the rear of the building to keep the knot of relatives of the members of Jonestown outside on the street. A woman swung futilely at the young black guard

inside the temple compound and he firmly closed the gate on her, his face impassive.

"Shoot me," the woman cried. "Shoot me like they did those other people in South America!"

The temple members on the other side stared. They had nothing to say to the concerned people, nor to reporters who asked questions. Archie Ijames read his speech to the crowd and there was nothing from the members. They had cancelled their Sunday services for fear of harassment by the crowd.

The Peoples Temple knew only what they read in the paper or saw on TV. The short wave had gone dead on Saturday and there had been nothing from Jonestown.

Ex-members knew the scheduled program of Jim Jones. Mass suicides and hit men, continuing what had been laid out in Guyana.

They were frightened and said so. Jones' program had included political personages as well in his conspiracy of murder and suicide. The temple members protested that they had no intention of committing suicide, or of killing any people. Ex-members didn't believe it.

Deputy Police Chief Clem DeAmicis went down to the Temple on Geary and was admitted into the building along with reporters. No photographers were allowed. The officer said that he was there on invitation of the Temple members to allay rumors of weapons in the place, as well as rumor of the mass suicides. After an extensive tour, the Deputy Police

Chief was satisfied that there was no indication of people being held against their will, nor was there any sign of weaponry.

Ted Patrick of San Diego, a religious deprogrammer, stated that he had warned for years that it would take a tragedy to get the government to act on cults. He urged a Watergate-style investigation of cults and asked for new legislation to protect people from what he termed "mental kidnaping."

The problem of "hit-men", denied by those remaining at the Peoples Temple, presented a situation for Bay Area Police Departments. Reports from ex-members were animated and frightened when they spoke of their concern over the final stages of Jones' diabolical plan.

The wife of Don Sly, the man who attacked Leo Ryan with a knife at Jonestown, stated that he used to scream, "Kill 'em all!" during church council meetings. She stated that she loved him, "But now he's become a monster. I know he is totally dedicated to killing the defectors—including me."

The investigation of the hit-men was taken up additionally by the F.B.I.

Even in death, the fruits of Jim Jones' insanity lived to plague those who had not died. One group said one thing. Another group said something different. The population of San Francisco and the rest of the United States, blinked in disbelief at the virtual swamp of news stories and wondered just what the hell was going on. Security was stepped up

around the political figures of the state as a precautionary measure until the hit-men could either be investigated or apprehended—if they, in fact, existed.

Looking back over the years of information by defectors, and the accuracy of their reports on the Peoples Temple, there seemed no reason to doubt their word—even if the entire thing seemed beyond belief.

The city was just beginning to regain a modicum of composure over the Guyana tragedy when, on Monday morning, November 27, Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk were shot to death in their respective offices at the City Hall. A half an hour later, former Supervisor Dan White turned himself in to San Francisco Police surrendering a .38 caliber revolver, extra ammunition and nine spent casings.

San Francisco again reeled in disbelief.

Although the senseless killings of the two officials had nothing to do with the Peoples Temple operation, the shooting caused even heavier security to be placed around politicians.

The Guyana affair left the front page and its week of banner headlines were replaced by banners of another, but still violent, crime.

Now there is the aftermath of Jonestown, the investigations, the question of the vast amount of money and property the temple owns. There is the investigation into the so-called "hit squads" that

may still be waiting their chance. There is the question of perhaps a few people hiding in the deep jungles of Guyana. There is, in fact, the subject of the Peoples Temple itself—will it continue under different leadership? Or will it collapse under the weight of the hundreds of dead members in Jonestown?

One thing is certain, the Guyanese government said they will not allow the Peoples Temple back into Guyana, although they may continue the Jonestown settlement with their own people as settlers.

Jones?

Perhaps Matthew Naythons, in a special copyrighted report to the San Francisco *Chronicle,* summed up Jim Jones when he quoted a Guyanese air force major, who had once met the infamous cult leader.

"He always wore sunglasses," the major recalled. "I only saw his eyes once, when he took them off, and he looked like that man from California, what was his name . . . uh, Manson."

Is There Protection For The Innocent?

CHAPTER TWELVE

There is no way to protect "the true believer" from himself, just as there is no way to prevent the charlatan from rising out of the population to lead his quasi-religious followers into a termination such as that at Guyana. It is impossible to stop an idea, no matter how detrimental, and the "holy" huckster can always hide behind the camoflage of faith, the truth and the light.

There is, of course, a way to keep him out of the political structure. Separate church and state. Any man of the cloth has enough to do by simply caring for his flock, without becoming involved in politics. Jones used this political affiliation to good advantage during his career as a cult leader. Who questions the man of God? Who dares to think ill of a man who

appears just, good and holy? Yet, for all of Jones' religious demeanor he was "as ravenous as wolves". Who among the ordinary populace can obtain a government job without being investigated? Are religious leaders different? If it is politically, or constitutionally, unfair to keep the clergy from politics, fine. It is not unfair to investigate the man in detail.

The true believer, no matter what cause he espouses, cannot argue; he can only parrot the words of his leader and is consequently ineffectual in society. In fact, it is this very ineffectuality in society that causes him to begin his belief in the cause. Often this person comes from an underprivileged section of society, but not always. He comes from all walks of life.

Believers have one thing in common with their brothers—the knowledge that through the family or the cause they will eventually reach up somewhere above the commonplace to a form of paradise, whether it is religious, social or political; and toward that end he is perfectly willing to die. While asking tolerance of his beliefs, he is intolerant of the beliefs of others, knowing in his heart that whoever does not think as he does is an enemy. He cannot understand why everyone does not see the light of his chosen path and constantly belabors others with his ideology.

He particularly dislikes people who were once a part of the group but have now reasoned out that the

cause is not what he thought it to be. The cult leader, on the other hand, who does think for himself, is happily shed of the drop-out. The last thing in the world he needs is someone who thinks.

In a minor vein, all religions have these people in their midsts, passing out their tracts and pamphlets on the street corners, or spreading what they consider the word. Luckily most of these zealots have found a cause closely aligned with the Bible and hence may be annoying but are harmless to society. Spreading the word of God is, in fact, a worthwhile occupation. Of course, in order to spread it, the spreader has to assume that his subject has never even nodded at religion. A strange assumption.

There are those who claim that Jim Jones' Jonestown was perfect until that fateful Saturday and they delude themselves. Jones was slowly going insane and a great many people knew it, but their conditioning prevented them from stopping it. Schacht should have known better, as well as many others. Perhaps the congregation could have been saved through careful handling of the situation. Another chosen leader might have undone the wrongs of Jones and saved the settlement and lives. When a ruler ceases to reign wisely, he is removed and another put in his place. The deposed prince is accorded every token of respect and affection for the benefit of the project. Erect a monument in the park to his memory and forget him. It is better to remove a madman than to submit to him—the old rotten apple cliche.

Some of Jones' people were ready to die, and perhaps would have, but not all. The others, under a kindlier rule, would have survived. The money was surely there. In every instance of such a colony, the rotten apple must be removed—gently, if at all possible—by force, if necessary.

But such was not the case in Jonestown. Let us learn by the horror of this experience, and recall an old truism:

THOSE WHO DO NOT REMEMBER THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the flood of information that has inundated the country as a result of the recent tragic events in Guyana, Americans may well be overwhelmed by the horror of what has occured in the once-obscure jungle community of Jonestown. The nation deserves to know not only what happened there, but *why*—from what seed did this incredible evil spring? How far down into the subsoil of American life do its roots go? And has the horror finally ended—or only just begun?

The situation that has developed in Guyana is the culmination of a problem that all Americans will have to address themselves to in the future—the problem of the cults that are rampant in our country. I do not advocate a "witch hunt", or a McCarthy-type purge of any organization that is within the bounds of human decency, even if it borders on what some may call the "lunatic fringe" of society. But surely any group that employs the incredibly dehumanizing tactics of the Peoples Temple deserves to be thoroughly investigated and, if necessary, dissolved.

In this book I have drawn material from many sources, some official, some unofficial. Whenever possible I have stated my source in the text. I am particularly indebted to the excellent coverage by the San Francisco area newspapers, particularly the *Examiner* and the *Chronicle*, as well as the Oakland *Tribune*.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have helped me put this volume together in such a short time. It is a story that had to be told.

Michael E. Knerr
San Francisco, California

December 1, 1978

WHY DID THEY CHOOSE TO DIE?

On November 18, 1978, in an isolated jungle village, more than 900 men, women and children voluntarily took poison and died at the behest of cult leader Jim Jones.

Who was Jones, and what was the secret of his strange power over his devoted followers?

WHAT BIZARRE SEXUAL PRACTICES DID HE ENCOURAGE—AND PARTICIPATE IN?

Did Jones die of a self-inflicted gunshot wound or was he murdered by one of the missing survivors?

Printed in U.S.A